



Savi Nenapugalu 2020 - 2021

#### **ANNUAL REPORT**

#### 2020 - A unique year in the history of our lives!

Last year, we prepared our annual report locked down at home, in anticipation of a day when man will take control of the virus or vanquish it. One year hence, nothing much seems to have changed except that we have adapted to the situation. Worldwide, educational institutions had to deal with this invisible danger. Amidst fears of the spreading virus; schools, teachers, parents and children were faced with challenges and questions around education. If we could go to the next grades without an exam, then is exam really a necessity? Is school the only place where learning happens? If lessons can be learnt online, then what is the role of school and teachers? What should parents do to engage children if they are at home all the time? Whose responsibility is it to sustain teachers if children don't come to school? The situation gave rise to innovations and creative ways of learning – some good and some not-so-good.

Udhbhavaha too went through the questions, dilemmas and apprehensions, and today looking back we see a year filled with new perspectives. A strong holding on to our fundamental principles, clarity on what true learning means, support from our teachers, faith of our parents and the community staying together helped us steer through this year of uncertainty and difficulty.

#### Highlights of the pandemic year...

A year of true learning and memorable experiences for children and family

13-Mar-2020 When we declared an early closure of Udhbhavaha following the lockdown, little did we realize that it's going to prolong beyond the vacation period. Come June, and the world seemed to be losing in the battle against Covid. Taking a cue from the corporate world, educational institutions switched to conducting online classes, without fully considering/ understanding the ramifications of this decision on tender minds. Technology advancement made online learning possible but along with it came hard lessons that the child is granted access to a smartphone/ laptop and everything else that these devices carry; the logic that long screen time is harmful for children can be overridden as per our convenience; result is more important than the journey itself.

After much debate within our team, we decided not to go the "online" way! But then, how else did learning happen?

**Firstly**, the myth had to be broken that children learn only at school and only from a teacher. Wherever children are, that's their learning space. We encouraged parents to include children in the regular activities at home like cooking, gardening, cleaning and washing. Setting up a regular rhythm at home was the most important factor.

#### Learning @ home



Stuthi and Dhriti drawing water from the well at their grandparents' home



Khushi feeding pigeons on the terrace



Rudr drawing a rangoli



Nimisha helping her mother in the kitchen



What's your next move? Vishnu trying to outwit his father at a game of chess

#### Highlights of the pandemic year...

While these methods helped address some learning needs of the child, we also had to think of ways to meet their academic needs. We went back to our good old forgotten friend for their service – the Indian Postal Service! Teachers made the learning plans/ assignments and sent to children via post and along with the learning children learnt to write letters and send back their assignments to teachers via post. Eventually, this led to children writing letters to their friends and cousins and that was indeed a feel to be experienced. We had teachers themselves delivering the learning material to children at their homes in certain instances. This mode of learning built in the acumen of self-learning and self-regulation to some extent.

Once the lockdown was lifted, older children started coming thrice a week to Udhbhavaha and the younger children once a week. This helped in all teachers getting atleast one touch point with children in a week. Inspite of the situation, we were able to do two travels with children. The older class children travelled to Yelkod, a remote village in the Western Ghats, where they spent few days in the wilderness learning the flora and fauna, and life in the mountainous region. Few classes also went on a one-day guided trek to Bidirukatte.

## Learning in the forests of the Sahyadri mountain range



Caterpillar of a Death's Head Hawk-moth



Sanjana grinding dosa batter in Latha akka's ancestral home

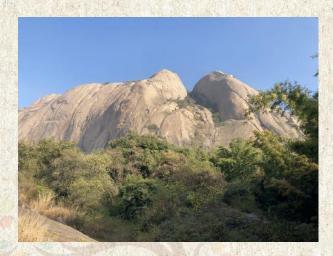


Seshadri anna explaining about the different trees and their ecological significance

#### Trek to Bidrukatte



Banni...trek hogona!



Savandurga....we are coming soon! View of Savnadurga rocks from Bidrukatte



Breakfast...on the rocks!!!

Post lockdown, when we met children and parents, they had valuable lessons to share from their lockdown diaries. Much of this happened only because children had to stay at home for an extended duration.

Cooking topped the list with all age groups trying breakfast, lunch items, ice-cream and baking cake.

Children owning up household chores like cleaning bathrooms, brooming, mopping, washing utensils, washing, drying and folding clothes and looking after pets.

With parents being at home, it was a bliss for children to have more time with them. Parents have observed that children with siblings at home spent a lot of time playing with them and taking care of their needs. Many children spent time with grandparents and cousins and made good friends with neighbours. Children spent time with them playing board games, card games, chess, UNO, star gazing. They loved the many stories that grandparents and parents told them.

It was also a time for art and craft to soothe them, some that they knew already and some that they learnt from friends or picked from YouTube — painting, drawing, knitting, crochet, making mandalas, rangolis, origami, handmade greeting cards, warli art, Ganesha idols, picking flowers and making garlands, making fabric dolls.

Children along with parents spent time gardening, collecting dried leaves from the entire street and composting, building ponds. They have owned up sowing seeds, applying manure, watering, de-weeding, etc

They learnt cycling and traffic rules and skate boarding.

They started using the cycle to go to nearby shops.

Children learnt new slokas, bhajans, songs and meditation

Thanks to DD National, few children along with their families had an experience of the repeat telecast of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shani and Saibaba serials.

Few families introduced their children to learning to write in mother tongue which was a wonderful idea!

It was also a time of slow down and nature recovering back. The slow pace of life allowed parents and children to observe certain wonders of nature like a wasp building its home with a lot of difficulty little by little and eventually dying, spotting snakes near homes, observing bird routines and feeding them.

We had few new families joining the Udhbhavaha community who had to relocate closer to our campus. Children actively took part in all shifting activities and setting up/ decorating the new house after moving.

Along with all of these, they stayed up to date with academics and practiced Kalaripayattu, Bharathnatyam, Sangeetha and Samskrita

This year added many words like epidemic, pandemic, isolation, Covid, lockdown and quarantine to their vocabulary!

Some of the good experience families had this year

Everyone had a lot of time for each other at home. Parents started spending more time at home. With the family being together, meal times were together, play times were together deepening the family bonds

Life slowed down. Good sleep and rest was part of the package

Learnt to live with less and with what's available

Lot of free time to do things besides office work, pursuing hobbies or doing that one item in your To-Do list that was lingering there for long

Getting a perspective on how to look at uncertainty and being comfortable with it.

Being compassionate with people going through fear and challenges of Covid and doing our bit like preparing lunch for apartment security personnel

Some of the not-so-good experience that families went through in the difficult times

Erratic home rhythms, delayed sleep time

Complacency and laziness crept in

Less physical activity and irregular eating habits

Children felt imprisoned inside the four walls of the house all the time, could not go out, meet or play with friends

Children slowly got used to staying at home and with adults around

Devices like TV and iPads crept in

Children missed school, reading and writing. Less academics during the year

Seeing the disease and death around created internal stress and pain

#### @ Marali Mannige Farm, Gowribidanur



Providing the dates plantations with timely nourishment of pachagavya, under the guidance of Diwakar anna



Preparing cow dung cakes, that are burnt to ward off mosquitoes in the evening.

What do children learn when they go trekking with teachers and parents?

They learn to have FUN!

Exploring the forests around Gowribidanur



#### Back @ campus

The kaluve (canal) adjacent to our campus is a constant source of entertainment for all through the year





Yoga class in progress, led by Vasant anna



Latha akka and Likhita akka with children of shishuvatika and aarambha

#### Back @ campus



Umesh anna and Prithvi anna learning Shastriya Sangeetha under the guidance of Deepashree akka



Sanjana spraying gaumuthra to protect corn crops from insects and pests



Ananya and Adwita practising their kalaripayattu lessons

#### Back @ campus



Umesh anna using his roopachitra (formdrawing) skills to draw a rangoli



When colours come together, magic happens!
Wet-on-wet paintings by children



Children taking Lakshmi to graze during their morning nature walk



Mixing soil and manure for preparing different kinds of saplings

# Deepening our understanding of education and life as a community

In the absence of physical meetings, there had to be some other ways of connecting with each other and holding the energies together.

#### Seed-to-seed story in Gauribidanur

Though life came to a stand-still for most people around the world, nature carried on at its own course without a moment's pause. Farmers had to go into their fields and toil hard, whether it was sunny, raining or cold, else what will we eat? At the right time the seeds had to be sown, nourished and taken care for a good harvest. This was a great opportunity for the Udhbhavaha community to come together, away from the hustle-bustle of Bengaluru and fears of Covid, at Marali Mannige farm in Gauribidanur. Here, children and parents together experienced the life cycle of a paddy seed while also getting a peek into the hard life of a farmer. The seeds were sown, fields were made ready and saplings replanted, timely de-weeding activity was done. 6 months of hard work was rewarded in the form of two-and-a-half tons of rice just before Sankranthi. Children and parents were equally part of this story and each one had some unique experience to take back.

#### Seed-to-seed story



Diwakar anna invoking the blessings of Bhoomi thayee for a good harvest



Fields ready for replanting of paddy saplings



Replanting paddy saplings and getting a free top-up of vitamin D



#### Seed-to-seed story



Correcting some of the mistakes done while replanting paddy saplings

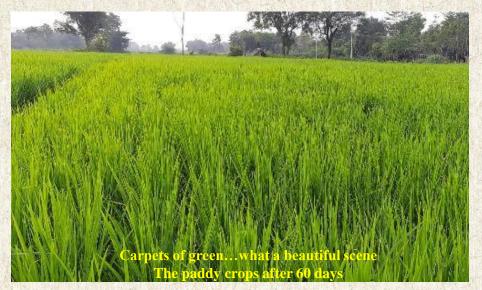


De-weeding



Yeeeaaaaah......SPLASH!
Cooling off at the baavi (open well)
after a hard day's work





#### Seed-to-seed story



Prithvi anna offering gratitude to the forces of nature for a bountiful harvest



With a sickle in hand, Ananya chops away at the paddy straw

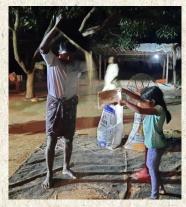


Work is life, work is fun!





Sharavati, Adwita and others trying to minimise the loss of paddy by gathering the straws that have dropped off



Urvi joins Prabhakar anna to remove the dust mixed with paddy

Ooonna palaga, Ooonna palaga Beating the straw

Manthan - Every month, we had parents and teachers come together online to know what is happening in each other's life and also to discuss on topics that connected us. We engaged in deep, meaningful conversations amongst parents on varied topics like What is true education, Fear, Media – trying to understand how print media, TV news channels and social media impact our thought process and influence our decisions. These discussions summarized blogs and available here as https://www.udhbhavaha.org/blog/. During Manthans we spent time knowing each of our families better, their biographies as individuals and as couples and their journey to Udhbhavaha.

Ootada Udhbhavaha — In our journeys in Udhbhavaha, we want every family to connect back to their roots and know their family history. An easy and interesting way to begin was to find out traditional recipes of our families. Every family researched on their family recipes, grandmother's recipes, tried for themselves at home and shared with the community. We experienced the different flavours of life through food and the diversity of our land just in this one aspect.

Teachers and parents reading circles – This year, we started with Book Reading sessions with teachers and parents. Reading and understanding the book "Dumbing Us Down" together and discussing the topics was an eye opener for many of us on looking at certain educational principles

#### Ootada Udhbhavaha



#### Heerekai Hulsoppu (ಹೀರೆಕಾಯಿ ಹುಳ್ನೊಪ್ಪು)

- Ridge gourd coarsely chopped 1 cup
- Coriander 1/2 cup
- Grated Coconut ¼ cup
- Tamarind 1 marble sized ball
- Green Chilies 2
- Roasted Gram (fried gram) 1 tsp
- Oil 2 tsp
- Turmeric 1/4 tsp
- Jaggery ½ tsp
- Hing 1/8 tsp



### OOTADA UDHBHAVAHA

**MAJJIGE KODUBALE** 

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- Rice Flour
- Salt
- Butter Milk



PREP TIME: 20 MINS COOK TIME: 10 MINS **TOTAL TIME: 30 MINS** 

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Mix 1 Portion of Butter Milk and ½ portion



Boil the mixture on lo ame & add salt & Jeera to the mixture



dd 1 portion rice Flour to the boiling liquid . Keep tirring the mixture with a g rice floor ( Like the way you do it for aration of Ragi Balls )



After the mixture gets the dough consistency , take ut the dough and spread it on a muslin cloth and



NOW THE DOUGH IS READY FOR



#### Ingredients:

Drumstick leaves - 150g Idli Rice - 1 Cup (150g) Chana Dal - 1 Cup (150g) Red Chilli - 5 to 6

Coconut - 1/2 medium size Urad Dal - 2 blg spoon

Methi seeds - 1/4 tsp Coriander leaves - small qty

Oil - 1 tsp Salt - to taste





#### Method:

- ✓ Extract the drumstick leaves, wash and keep it.
- ✓ Soak Idli rice and chana dal for around 45 minutes.
- Grate half the coconut and keep it.
- ✓ Fry the red chilli with little oil.
- ✓ Fry Urad dal, Methi seeds with little oil.
- Grind Coconut, Fried red chilli, Urad dal and Methi Seeds
- ✓ Coarsely grind Soaked Rice and Chana dal
- Mix the grinded items together, add salt and mix.
- Cook it in Idli cups for 35 to 40 minutes



Now add drumstick leaves and chopped coriander leaves.



Nugge Soppina Kadubu

Traditional recipes sent by Udhbhavaha community members during the lockdown We have a collection of close to 35 recipes, ready to be published as a book!

#### **Extending beyond Udhbhavaha community**

#### Charcha series

During the lockdown, teachers had ample opportunity to regularly discuss with our mentors on deeper topics related to education and life. Eventually, we decided to open up these discussions to a wider audience as they were rich with content that everybody should reflect upon. Thus emerged a series called Charcha, where Udhbhavaha teachers shared a platform with Sri Pawan Guptaji, Sri Govind Prabhuji and Sri Arun Elassery, discussing on topics like "What is true education?", "Education in these changing times", "Shiksha and Swatantrata", "Learning outside the Classroom", "Education and Self-Confidence". The live streaming of these discussions saw at least 150 people joining us from far and wide through Zoom and Facebook live. The Charcha series videos are available on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Udhbhavaha and YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBhL9LsotjcdhDukJ4ah15g/vi deos.

#### **Dhrishti**

Our experiences with children for more than 5 years enabled us to take these experiences to a larger group outside Udhbhavaha through Dhristhi, a workshop that gave parents a perspective on looking at parenting and child education.

#### **Community Outreach**



Charcha flier circulated on social media

Charcha session in progress, moderated by Manju anna and Diwakar anna





Dhrishti flier circulated on social media

Few other events and activities at Udhbhavaha worth mentioning

#### **Physical expansion**

With the strength of the community growing, the existing infrastructure had to be expanded. We put up 3 tents as classrooms this year. A real memorable experience of the parent community coming together from planning to implementing, indeed a herculean task made possible with many hands coming together

#### Making sense of Modernity course

Most of our teachers and few parents attended an online course "Making sense of Modernity" conducted by Sri Pawanji and Sri Arunji. An intense reflective course that helped in breaking some of the moulds we carried by virtue of our education and upbringing.

#### A matter of pride

Manju Anna was blessed with the opportunity to release Sri KS Narayanacharya's latest book "Sarpayaga". View details here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4palcI9-M78&t=760s

#### Construction of new classrooms



Pawan anna and Aditi akka meticulously examining the tent equipment



Mounting the tent fabric on to the framework



We caught a python!
No, no...it's the tarpaulin that goes on top of the tent



Washing the tents



Setting up the framework of the tent This was a treat for Lego lovers!



Children also contributed to the efforts

#### Construction of new classrooms and other events



Yeah! We put up the tent! Ye girega nahin na!



Side-view of our new classroom



Front-view of the tent



Diagonal-view of our new classroom

#### Education & Modernity

A 4-week online course for parents and teachers

Don't you think that the rat race of modernity has made us all disempowered and helpless? Reality and Truth, which we as human beings have natural access to, can provide an anchor. This facilitator-led online course does 'Dhyanaatarshan', draws the attention, to the Truth (and not theories or frameworks), of the teaching-learning process and the modern education system to put the power back in our hands.

FACILITATORS Pawan Kumar Gupta Co-Founder - SIDH, Speuker, Author, Educationist Arun Elassery Co-Founder - Asii Shiischa, Author

WHEN 30th November to 26th December, 2020

APPROXIMATET ME INVESTMENT 8-10 hours per week

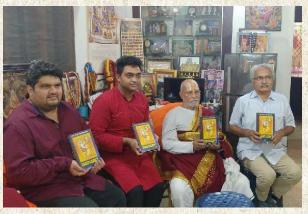
Rs 7500/- (Rupees Seven thousand five hundred only)

CONTACT Gall/WhatsApp 963398353D or write to learn@aslishiksha.com

DETA LED BROCHURE AT http://www.aslishiksha.com/workshops.html







Manju anna launching Sarpayaga, a book authored by Prof. Sri K S Narayanacharya

#### **Fundraising**

A challenging year for organizations across the world and a year of great learning and confidence in this space for Udhbhavaha. The whole community came together with various initiatives to hold Udhbhavaha together in its nascent stages. We are extremely fortunate to navigated through this year have turbulence, though with some difficulties, yet being able to meet the needs of our teachers. Parents did stretch and go the extra mile in funding, while also creating fund-raising opportunities like Dhrishti and Snake Awareness program. Support came in from Corporate CSRs and Educational Trusts too. One parent's initiative helped us get listed on Milaap, a crowd funding platform, and receive funds from generous donors across the world.





Be the foundational support to
Udhbhavaha

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Donate here

Vilaap

m-lp.co/udhbhava

#### Udhbhavaha community

#### Our family is growing

In the year, 2020-21, we grew to 34 children and 25 families.

We had **Likhita Akka** joining us this year to be with Shishuvatika and Aarambha children. Likhita Akka is from Udupi, born in Solapur and raised in Bangalore. An engineer by education but becoming a teacher was a conscious choice for her. Being with children gives her a lot of happiness and satisfaction and hence she chose this path. This explains the connect she builds with children of all age groups.



Udhbhavaha also grew bigger with 2 families welcoming a little one in their lives. Ananya Bhat was blessed with a baby sister and Aditya Acharya was also blessed with a baby sister.

As we were doing this report, Yamuna gave birth to a little calf, Navami, named appropriately since she arrived on the auspicious occassion of Rama Navami.



Yamuna with her new calf, Navami

#### Festivals and celebrations

#### **Festivals during Covid times**

What we missed the most this year due to Covid was community festival celebrations. While some of it could not be celebrated at Udhbhavaha in the initial months due to lockdown, we celebrated few towards the end with great enthusiasm

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Udhbhavaha's first anniversary in its current form. With the prevailing conditions of avoiding a public gathering, we made it special by couple of our teachers giving a surprise visit to every family with sweets!

Towards the end of the year, just before we began classes in a staggered manner, we conducted a **Dhanwantri Homa** for the well-being of Udhbhavaha and the larger community outside. The tiny tots starting this year went through a Vidyarambha ceremony

Gita Jayanthi – The positive energies of chanting filled the atmosphere as all verses of Bhagavad Gita were chanted by parents, teachers and children

**Shivaratri** - This was marked by a visit to the nearby temple and children seeking blessing of Lord Siva while few parents travelled to Coimbatore to participate in the Mahashivaratri celebrations at Isha Yoga Center.

**Holi** – Soaked in colours and fun, holi was played in the campus and Kamanna was burnt to mark the destruction of evil.

#### Festivals and celebrations





On Udhbhavaha's anniversary, Deepa akka and Diwakar anna visiting Vasant anna and Bharat anna's home to give sweets. Umesh anna also joined them



A mandala being drawn for the Dhanawantri Homa. Mandalas are an integral part of every homa.



Dhanawantri Homa conducted by Harish anna



Pratima akka initiating Ira in to formal learning during the Vidyarambha ceremony

#### Festivals and celebrations



Krishna Janmashtami celebrations



Holi celebrations in full swing



Kaamannana dahana



Kichadwali holi!

Festivals and celebrations

#### Sankranthi Habba

The Suggi Habba this time brought with it smiles and joy as the community came together after a long hiatus of almost a that Covid had imposed. The festivities Udhbhavaha missed was redressed by the grandeur of Sankranthi Habba. The celebrations had long stories of the journey of paddy harvest which children were part of, from seed to seed. Felicitating a farmer, Surya-arghya, Pongal-opongal, Raashi-puje, gau-puje, kichchu haayisuvudu added to the divinity of the day. Harvest songs, Tamate dance and Kite Flying made us let our hair loose and become one with the moment. Ellu-bella, pongal, sweet potatoes, sugarcane direct from the farm, added to the taste of the day. While the festival was a day to remember for all of us, the days leading to Sankranti were even more memorable. The making of ellu-bella with children, sewing those beautiful yellow and orange flowers together for the decorations, bringing out our creativity at the pot painting, late night preparations under the star-lit sky, colourful rangolis... all this dawned to a beautiful Sankrathi Habba.

#### Sankranti Habba - Preparations



Parents and teachers stringing flowers for decorations



Children painting earthen pots



Drawing rangoli at the entrance to welcome guests



Anagha and Esha painting the bullock cart



Mixture of sagni and mud used to paint a wall

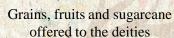


Women cleaning the paddy

#### Sankranti Habba - Celebrations



Dhaanyada raashi Heaps of grains







Cows decorated for gau pooje



Diwakar anna applying kajal to a cow



Diwakar anna performing raashi pooje

#### Sankranti Habba - Celebrations



Children narrating the seed-to-seed story



Pongal-o-pongal



The young and the old dancing together to the mesmerising beats of tamate, performed by local youth



Gaalipata – kite-flying



Everyone enjoying a delicious meal of boiled sweet potatoes, groundnuts and double beans followed by khara pongal and sweet pongal......BURP!

Sankranti Habba - Celebrations

#### Honouring a "secret hero" - Sri Manjunath

Since last year, we started following the practice of honouring the "secret heroes" of our country, the farmers. They toil day and night through the year, facing the sun, rain and cold, braving floods and drought, to provide food for the citizens of our country. And it gives us immense joy to invite such people into our midst, to honour them and be inspired by their life.

This year we felicitated Sri Manjunath, a young farmer from Kanakpura taluk. He owns Doddanna farm, which he inherited from his father. Though Manjunath did his BE, he refused to take up a corporate job, as he wished to utilise his knowledge and skills to help his father in the farm. Manjunath is a multi-faceted personality. He has an MSc degree in Yoga, can operate an earth-mover, dug a lake in his farm and has a keen interest in bee-keeping. How we wish he becomes a role model for the youth of our country!



Thus concluded a year that was a stepping stone in many ways for the years to come. Our heartfelt gratitude to all our teachers, parents, mentors and donors for their continued support and looking forward to yet another year of growing, learning and fun.



See you again next year!

