

KRISHNA TRUST

Annual Report (2020-21)

1. Last year (2020) the annual memorial event of Krishna Trust was held just before the pandemic began. However, thereafter, as noted in last year's Annual Trustee Meeting, the activities of the Trust were hampered due to the pandemic. This year as the pandemic waned a bit, the Eighth Krishna Memorial Award ceremony was held on 21 March 2021 at Swabhumi, Narkeldanga main Road, Kolkata. Health safety protocols were maintained and well wishers in restricted number were invited.

2. As in previous years, the programme was held in collaboration with the Calcutta Research Group (CRG). Dr. Samata Biswas, a member of the Calcutta Research Group and a teacher of the Sanskrit College and University chaired the programme. Sibaji Pratim Basu, Managing Trustee of Krishna Trust and Professor at Vidyasagar University, introduced the activities of Krishna Trust. Mohammad Mohiuddin, Chief, UNICEF, West Bengal Circle, spoke on the occasion, and gave the memorial lecture. He spoke on girl child education in India. Sabir Ahamed, an educationist and working in Pratichi Trust and a member of CRG, gave a presentation on ASHA Workers during the COVID time. Dr. Arup Sen, an educationist, economist, and a senior member of the Calcutta Research Group, conferred the Krishna Memorial Awards on:

- (a) Tania Das, a social leader working in Bhoruka Public Welfare Trust;
- (b) Jinat Rehena Islam, an educationist of Murshidabad; and
- (c) Ashina Gramin Library of Falta, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Madhurilata Basu , an educationist and a well wisher of the Trust from its inception offered the vote of thanks.

3. Ashina Gramin Library deserves a special mention in this report. An initiative was taken up by the villagers of Ashina, Falta in the district of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal to build up a village based library or book club in their village to prevent the school drop outs in the time of the COVID lock down. Many villagers were associated with garment works. Zari work in the village thrived, and provided regular means of livelihood. During the lock down many migrant zari workers came back from places like Hyderabad, Gujarat, and Mumbai as they lost their job in lockdown. In such a situation around mid July 2020, some of the returnee villagers who were zari artisans decided to set up a village based book club or library to help the village students cope with the adverse situation for the students. The main idea was to set up a rural library along with support classes by the local teachers in the village. Thus the Ashina Gramin Library started. Several people of Kolkata and a few small publishers and traders of College Street Boi Para stood by the initiative to arrange text books, reference Books, notebooks, pens, etc. Now, not only from the village of Ashina, but almost 40-50 students from nearby villages are regularly travelling to avail the library facility. There is a local library committee of the villagers. A system of a monthly subscription of Rs. 10/- for its member students is in place. (Interested Trustees may access the report by Dipanjan Sinha on the library in the *Wire* - <https://m.thewire.in/article/education/west-bengal-village-library-school-students-online-classes>)

4. On the same occasion, a group of ASHA workers was felicitated for their work during the pandemic in villages of West Bengal. ASHA workers belong to the vanguard of the care giving community in the pandemic time. Yet the union and state governments have not paid due attention to their difficulties and the adverse condition in which they work including poor pay. Sabir Ahamed's presentation on ASHA workers was based on the field research conducted with the help of a grant that Krishna Trust received this year from CRG. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, ASHA workers who later became the frontline health workers were invisible in the public health discourse. As the public health crisis deepened owing to COVID-19, ASHA workers were deployed as the frontline workers for containing the outbreak of the deadly virus. Each ASHA worker a tab on every household in her jurisdiction and a close watch on the health of the migrant returnees by conducting series of the surveys including – keeping the records of the status of co-morbidity in the community etc. They were deployed in the quarantine centres, which was not in their original mandate of duties. Sabir Ahamed's published lecture/report is enclosed. The Trust sincerely thanks Sabir Ahamed for the work. It also appreciates the fact that he conducted the work in the villages in the pandemic time. The Trust acknowledges the grant that it got from CRG for the research and publication.

5. With the onset of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and the continuing situation of the pandemic in 2021, Krishna Trust could not carry out any other work. Cyclone Amphan devastated the Sundarban region where Krishna Trust had planned to initiate work on girl child education. Individual members of the Trust contributed to the relief efforts in the cyclone devastated Sundarbans. Paula Banerjee in particular organized help towards the relief efforts there. Krishna Trust as reported last year collected money to support relief activities for the pandemic stricken people. However, the pandemic and cyclone made any other activity of the Trust nearly impossible. The Trust could render only indirect assistance.

5. The Trust's web portal (http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/krishna_trust/index.html) hosted by the CRG as part of its website (www.mcrgh.ac.in) is functioning. New material has been added.

7. As in last year, the Trust acknowledges the generous help of the Calcutta Research Group and its staff in organising the annual Krishna Memorial event, and hosting Krishna Trust's web-based material. The Trust continues to look for further sources of assistance and collaboration.

8. Subhas Ganguly as in last year again donated Rs. 5,000/ (rupees five thousand only). Shikha Gnaguly donated ten thousand rupees. The Trust wishes to put on record its gratitude for the help provided by the Calcutta Research Group, other institutions, and individuals in various forms towards its goals.

9. The Statement of Accounts and Auditors' Report (2020-21) is enclosed herewith.