



Calcutta Marudyan

Welcome to the
Orissa Hostel
February 2025



The children received the sweaters for Christmas, and I had brought some soft toys with me donated by Salvation Army and several charity shops in Devon. The house mother for the girls told me that some of the girls were awake till late in the night, as each was so thankful and happy with their new sweater and soft toy.



It's Saturday and sportsday at school

Sports uniforms are supplied by the school



The Girls on the left join the boys for a 20-minute walk to school. Always two adult males go along for safety and security.



6:30 morning voluntary sports



Always Learning

When asking our older children what they want to become, this is the written response that we received.

- **Five** would like to become **doctors** in order to help the people in their villages.
- **Six** would like to become **teachers** as education is sorely lacking in the backward areas
- **Five** of the boys would like to become **police officers**
- **Four** would like to become **community/social workers**

Manati Singh (girl) writes: my father is a farmer and my mother is housewife; I have a brother and sister. My village is Gahakiya and is 50 kilometres from the hostel. I am so happy to have the opportunity to be here in the hostel as I have friends and get to go to one of the best schools in Orissa. My dream is to become a teacher.

My name is Divya Ranjan Digal, there are nine members in my family. My father is farmer and mother is housewife. I am from the village Nedipadar which is 100 kms from the hostel. I am very happy to stay in the Marudyan hostel and go to a good school. I would like to join the police force and become a detective. *(Divya never used to smile for the first two years and now is all smiles from ear to ear. He is the oldest boy and he loves to clown around. I have been doing exercises with the boys at 6:30 in the morning for a half an hour and then we end it with jogging and running. Divya is taken over the exercises and is serious about doing a good job.)*

Sambit Patamajhi writes: My father is farmer and mother is housewife; there are 7 members in my family. I am very happy to be here. I live in Pidamaha which is 100 Kilometres from here. I want to become a community/social worker to help my people. *(Sambit is 11 years old, he translates for me into Oriya and Kui, which is the non-written local tribal language. At a school celebration Sambit was called on stage 3 times for being the best in his class for different subjects. The headmaster would like him to go to a government school for bright children but he wants to stay here in the hostel with us. I translate with Google translator and he corrects it. He is focussed and sticks to a job till it is done. An amazing jewel)*

CHANGED LIVES:

We have two girls with us. When they came, they had a very difficult time and were usually sitting on the side not wanting to partake. I found out that at home their father pretty much drinks the money that he earns. I was going to talk to the father the last time he came, but quickly left before I could catch him. The girls are finally adjusting and it is so good to see them enjoy themselves and playing with the others. They are picking up in their studies and are smiling.

Another older girl when she came two years ago, could not communicate or remember anything. We honestly did not know if she would be able to learn anything. She has now been with us a good two years and it is amazing to see such a changed person. I visited her school to see how she was doing if she could retain anything of the classes. I was honestly surprised to see how she is becoming one of the better students in her class. That is such an amazing reward for the staff and me.

As these are children from poor to very poor families, the wonderful thing is that none of these children have smart phones and when you talk to them or teach class they just listen and are so thankful to learn. They are pure, innocent, no mental problems, or wondering what gender they are. Just like when I was a child, and I love being here and teaching them as they appreciate it so.

After **moral class** we often give a **group hug** but then it turns into a wrestling match as you can see... Great fun.



Left to right: Raj-Kishore, Sambit, Noah, Divya.

“Sir, can we come in, can we talk?” – “What do you want to talk about?” – “Nothing just to be with you.”
“Let’s light the fire, sit down and talk about nothing.”

A Big thank you for your support and good wishes from the jungles of the Eastern Ghat Mountains in Orissa. May you be rewarded with good health and happiness. A big hug from everyone here.



7 girls with caps; 11 boys showing their medals and trophies

From India with love, John