

Issue 11

**PAHAD**

January 2006

**Newsletter*****From the Chairperson***

Times have been turbulent in my country and life has been difficult for us all. However, I never seem to be amazed at the resilience of the human spirit in that day to day things get done in a day to day manner. This does apply to us here at PAHAD where we do our jobs conscientiously no matter what is happening around us. Those of us who are studying study hard, others work hard at their jobs and at the same time all of us find the extra time to devote to our organization and thereby contribute significantly towards the helping of the less privileged in our society. Let me give you a few examples.

Major Rai is always there when we need him, running around on his bicycle, trying hard to earn more money for PAHAD. With Major Mallal the two of them must have cajoled most of their friends and relatives to become members. Mrs. Rai together with member Kalyani Moktan are the mainstay of our now successful annual mela. It was great to see the spouses (mine included) take an active part at the mela. They gave up a Saturday to help us out.

Then there are our young members like Hikmat and Bhaba who are trying to balance hard so many different activities successfully. Members like Ram Babu Subedi and D K Sherstha, so busy with their jobs at Budhanilkantha, have

contributed greatly to PAHAD's activities. Mr. Subedi is now helping to raise funds by bringing out a magazine "Glimpse" which will also be a window into the world of Pestalozzi. Here, I must not, of course, forget our student members like Tara, Sushila and Ambika who redeem themselves by turning up and working very hard just as I am threatening dire actions against them! PAHAD is a motley team with members from different walks of life but we meet and we work together to try and make life a bit more bearable for a few of the underprivileged in our society. Thinking of all this makes my job as the Chairperson very easy and I am grateful to all members who work so hard for the organization. At the same time I am also grateful to our members and honorary members living abroad. They remember PAHAD again and again and help us out financially. Every little bit helps and I thank them.

Finally it is so good to learn that our children at the Asian Village are doing so well. Our wards here at various schools in the valley and outside are also doing well and that is definitely something all of us have contributed towards and we should be proud about. Let us hope that 2006 will be a good year not just for PAHAD but for our dear country and my very best wishes to all our readers.

*Jana Thapa***PAHAD Blog**

We have created a web-log (blog) for PAHAD, where readers may read news and post comments directly. Please visit <http://pahadonline.blogspot.com> to read this edition of PAHAD Newsletter online.

**Change in Address**

Readers, please note that PAHAD's postal address has changed as follows:

**PAHAD Association**

GPO Box 8975

EPC 5398

Kathmandu

NEPAL

For further queries, please email us at [pahadonline@gmail.com](mailto:pahadonline@gmail.com).

## Fundraising - PAHAD Mela

**PAHAD's second Mini Fun Fair and Raffle Draw***By Ambika Khadka*

On 7<sup>th</sup> January 2006, a warm day of midwinter, people gathered on the grounds of Malpi International College. It was not a rock concert that brought in the crowd, but the most awaited event of the year that was PAHAD's Mini Fun Fair and Raffle Draw.

The organisers made their way a little earlier to have their tasks arranged and done. They hustled and bustled, moved hither and thither, and finally had their respective stalls set up. This busy period showed heavy engrossment and enthusiasm into their work. Many interesting stalls were set up, ranging from fascinating games to delicious foods.



*Ambika won a jar of toffees for guessing the amount*

Around 11:00, people of all walks of life started pouring in. Soon after, a mesmerising crowd garnished our arrangement at the Malpi premises. Around two hundred people made it to the fair, including young children. The game stalls such as fortune stairs, fishing game and mini casino were popular among children, whereas the adults gave their tongue a bit of exercise with delicious food items to sample, such as *momos*, *sel roti*, *aloo dam*, *pakoda*, *achar* and much more. Many rushed to exercise their brain by guessing the number of toffees in a jar and guessing the name of a lonely teddy bear. A considerable crowd could be seen at a stall selling flower plants and another stall that was the thrift shop selling toys and books for children.

The day was a merry one; everyone seemed to enjoy it to the fullest. Children were very happy with the gifts they received after winning the games, so much so that they were enthusiastic to play the same games again and again. I myself had a fair luck, as I won the jar of toffees by guessing the amount! At 3:00, people gathered around the deck for the auction, where many interesting things were put for bidding, such as an antique bell, a teddy bear, a chocolate cake, and luncheon and dinner offers at highly rated hotels and cafés. Those people who bought the items on auction were very generous to PAHAD, and

I think Dr. Thapa deserves credit for accepting most of them.

At last, it was time for the grand and heart throbbing event of the day that was the raffle draw. As the draws were made, one by one by little children, I could not help wishing for my number to come on the next draw; everyone else must have wished the same! Well, seven lucky people who bagged the prizes were:

**Consolation Prizes (Rs.1,000 each):**

1. Aakash Gautam (2300), Dillibazaar
2. Chime (5483), Chabahil
3. Binay Adhikari (7264), Kapan – 3
4. Binita Thapa (7177), Jawalakhel
5. Sewa KC (3224), Chakrapath

**Second Prize (Rs.5,000):**

Ramzee R (6495), RNAC Airport

**First Prize (Rs.10,000):**

Prabhu Shankar Shrestha (4667), Lazimpat

The event was a grand success; it would not have been this successful without the hard work and dedication of the organisers, especially the members of the sub committee working for this fair. They deserve appreciation. Special thanks to everyone who helped, especially the hardworking ladies, Malpi International College and its staff. I hope that PAHAD will be able to continue with this kind of progress in the years to come. All the best!

*(Ambika is a POCT alumna, studying Environmental Sciences at Kathmandu University. She is also an active committee member of PAHAD.)*

**Pestalozzi Reunion 2006**

For the past many years, PAHAD representatives have attended the Pestalozzi Alumni Foundations' Reunions (which are supported by POCT) held in different countries. At these Reunions, Foundation members forge friendships, exchange ideas and gain inspiration from each other.

Reunion 2006 will take place in Thailand over the first weekend of March, and will be hosted by the Thai Pestalozzi Foundation by the sea, not far from Pattaya.

A delegation from PAHAD will be attending this Reunion. Watch this space for more news!

**Thanks**

PAHAD thanks all the generous donors, supporters and well-wishers for their support over the past year. We really appreciate your kindness. Every single rupee you have donated matters to us and to the children who need our help.

## POCT

*Bhaba Thami, secretary of PAHAD, was appointed the new POCT Coordinator for Nepal at the end of August 2005 after his predecessor, Bhola Shrestha, had to leave for a course in The Netherlands. His job requires him to make frequent visits to the schools where the POCT-sponsored children are studying, to monitor the progress of these students. In this connection, he and Hikmat recently visited the Sitaram Higher Secondary School in Doti. More in the following article:*

## A memorable visit to Doti

By *Hikmat Khadka*

Bhaba Thami and I visited Doti in Far West Nepal from 11 to 13 December 2005. The main purpose of our visit was to see the POCT sponsored students, who study at the Sitaram Higher Secondary School, in a village called Uchchakot of Doti.

On the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> December, a gentleman was waiting for us in Banedugrisen, a point on the Doti highway, where one has to get off, in order to start the uphill climb to Uchchakot. Mr. Ojha, the father of a former POCT student from Sitaram, very kindly escorted us to the school. We arrived there after an hour and a half of walking.

Mr. Lal Bahadur Kathayat (Lal Sir, who is a life member of PAHAD), the headmaster of the school, and the only person we knew in Doti before the trip, was very pleased to see us. We sat in his office, exchanged greetings, and got talking casually. When it was soon tea-break, we were joined by his staff. We spoke briefly of Pestalozzi, and informed them about our plans during the visit.

Then Lal Sir took us to the boys' hostel, about a kilometre away from the school premises. This would be our home during our stay. This was also where Lal Sir and his wife (also a teacher at the same school) and other residential staff lived. It was a two-storey concrete building, painted mostly in white. The rooms were large and spacious. There was a separate toilet block outside the hostel. Electric lighting was introduced here only a few years ago. Water was in short supply. It flowed through a pipe from a distant spring, and had to be stored in a tank for drinking and other use. Given its remote location, the hostel seemed to provide good facilities.

We left our bags at the hostel, and went to the 'mess' to have lunch. This was in a separate building, just a little downhill from the hostel. It was divided into two parts – cooking area and dining space, but lacked the basic 'infrastructure' like benches and tables. So, students would either stand and eat, or sit in a squatting position!

We were happy to have for lunch fresh local vegetables, grown by students and staff themselves. Every day, they get to eat these home-grown vegetables, although the rice and the lentils have to be purchased from elsewhere. Vegetable farming seems to be the only vocational activity

for students at present, although knitting and sewing training for girls used to be provided before.

Just before dinner time in the evening, all the hostel students (including some that were non-POCT) and the residential staff gathered in a big room of the next building that was the self-catering hostel for girls (part-funded by POCT). In spite of its recent successful completion, this hostel has not found candidates to be fully functional, and is, at the moment, being used for extra classes, outside school hours.

As the POCT students are residential, it was possible for us to see them all in one place. 26 were present that evening; one had gone home because of illness, and 5, we were told, had left the school some months ago, to join *People's War*.

The evening began with the students introducing themselves to us. Then they welcomed us by garlanding our necks with fresh marigold flowers, and by 'painting' our foreheads red with vermilion powder – an honour we did not truly deserve!

We ate that night with Lal Sir. Two other staff, the librarian and the accountant, sacrificed their bedroom for us, making sure there were sufficient quilts and blankets to keep us warm enough. We were moved by their kind hospitality. The hostel boys gathered in our room before bedtime, and we enjoyed talking informally, which also gave us a chance to get to know each other better.

We spent the entire day on the 12<sup>th</sup> with the POCT students. Bhaba interviewed them individually, while I helped take photographs and engaged the ones he was not interviewing. I told them about Pestalozzi – the man and his philosophy of education – and about some establishments named after him, including Pestalozzi Overseas and the Village in the UK. I also gave them a short English lesson, and tried to listen to them as much as possible, although it was hard work to make them speak. The boys seemed to be relatively more extrovert than the girls, who were far too shy and quiet to say anything.

We had lunch with the students, and went to take a look at the girls' hostel in the same neighbourhood, which, like the boys' hostel, seemed to provide generally good facilities. Some of the students, both boys and girls, came from suppressed communities, or so called lower castes, referred to as *Dalits*, and treated by society as untouchables. However, we saw no discrimination there. *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* were treated alike; they shared bedrooms, ate together, and lived in harmony. It was heartening to see this positive development at Sitaram, which itself is part of a superstitious and conservative society, where one is discriminated against, on the basis of caste and gender.

POCT's investment in the education of these needy students in Doti is, no doubt, making a big difference in their lives. Everyone deserves a fair chance, and, I feel, these children are being given a good one at that. Without an opportunity like this from POCT, it is hard to predict where their lives would be today. Most of their families are so poor that they

*POCT continued.....*

cannot afford an education for their child. And without an education, who knows if the futures of these children would not be insecure and uncertain, bleak and black? Former POCT students from Doti have mostly done well, and are today either pursuing further studies or working. Current POCT students, too, look very promising, and would do well with continued support.



*A difference has been made in these lives*

On the 13<sup>th</sup>, our final day, the students organised a farewell programme in our honour, whereby they decorated us, once again, with flower garlands and vermilion powder. They also sang and danced in our honour, and delivered speeches to express gratitude towards POCT, for its positive impact on their lives. Without POCT's contribution, they said, they would not be where they are today.

One student said to us, "Every child feels more comfortable with their Mother, and although you are males, you are like Mother to us. Our Father (POCT) is too far away right now, but today we talk to him through you. Please carry our grateful thanks to his ears!"

We explained to them that we did not deserve all the honour they were bestowing on us, that we had come only as POCT's messengers, and that the POCT team that works so hard to raise funds to support their education would have been very proud of them, had they been there physically that day.

We left a little after midday. The students became rather emotional about our departure, proving how attached they had become to us in just three days. We encouraged them to smile, as with every departure, they say, there is hope of another reunion. And we left with a vow to visit them again. Five boys accompanied us up to Gopghat, another point on the highway, from where we would take the bus to our next destination.

I recollect with great fondness the beautiful moments spent with the students (and the staff) in Doti. Their simplicity overwhelms me, as does their innocence. It was a privilege to be able to touch their pure hearts through POCT. Bhaba and I returned home to Kathmandu as two very happy men, having gained many new and special friends.

*(Hikmat is the vice-chair of PAHAD)*

**Membership Update**

PAHAD takes pleasure in welcoming the following new members to the organisation:

Nanda Bahadur Gurung	Milan Chandra Gurung
Bishnu Parajuli	Jitendra Bista
Nayan Tara Bista	Babita Bista
Irene Johnston	Nabita Thapa
Praveen Thapa	Durga Gautam
R C Tamang	Kamini Kaushal Gurung
Bishnu Addison	Rajani Lama

**The PAHAD committee has decided to award Honorary Membership to Mrs. Irene Johnston in recognition of her constant financial support to the organisation.**

PAHAD's total membership to date stands at **118**.

**Scholarship Update**

PAHAD is currently supporting the education of 20 needy children from Solukhumbu, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Dhading, Kaski and Syangja districts.

The latest group of children was selected as follows for **2062 BS batch**, in April 2005:

**Girls (2):**

**Puja Lama**, Grade 4, Solidarity International Academy, Teku, Kathmandu

**Saraswati Magar**, Grade 4, Tilingtar Secondary School, Dhapasi, Kathmandu

**Boys (2)**

**Sanjay Rai**, Grade 4, Little Blossom Academy, Shantinagar, Kathmandu

**Jona Tamang**, Grade 4, Tilingtar Secondary School, Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Additionally, three more children were selected in place of three students from the previous batches whose scholarships were terminated by the committee due to unsatisfactory progress. The newly selected children and their details are given below:

**Girls (2)**

**Shradha Sapkota**, Grade 4, Kalika Devi Secondary School, Batase, Sindhupalchok

**Junu Shrestha**, Grade 5, Dhumrabarahi Lower Secondary School, Dhumbarahi, Kathmandu

**Boy (1)**

**Purushottam Khadga**, Grade 4, Panchayan Celestial School, Dhapasi, Kathmandu

One of the bright PAHAD students, **Kavita Shrestha** (2004 batch), is now at the Pestalozzi Children's Village Society (PCVS), Dehradun, where she is receiving intensive coaching for entry into a good school this year. She will continue to receive the annual scholarship grant she used to get from PAHAD up to her tenth grade.

**Scholarship Selection 2006**

Members, please note that you are eligible to nominate children for the **2063 BS** selection, which will take place around April/May 2006. For more information / selection forms, please get in touch via email.