

Nirban Math Year End Newsletter - 2021



Children eating in the new long classroom after major structural repairs



New perimeter fencing being installed.



New roof on the east side portico of Shanti Ashram

Nirban Math also saw major repairs & upgrades as listed below:

- new Jal Chaad on the two story building

- new outdoor kitchen facilities for major celebrations
- needed repairs to the staff bathrooms
- new detached guest bathroom with western toilet
- new geysers in the main building
- new platform for future generator installation
- new underground reservoir to capture corporation water
- new roof mounted water tank to provide better water supply to Shanti Ashram
- weather protected power outlets distributed around the campus with underground wiring

General Repairs:

Aside from the specific work done on the main structures, we also did the following:

- put in new security barbed wire around the whole perimeter
- did general cleanup of dead trees and debris such as bricks, sand, stone chips etc that had collected over the years; some these were re-utilized in the repairs
- also cleaned up overgrown vegetation on rail side of the perimeter wall
- put in steel mesh covers on the wells to prevent falling branches and leaves
- beautification of the grounds around the new Mandir

Of interest to note is that much of the materials required for the Nirban Math repairs - such as bricks, stone chips etc - were reclaimed from the grounds itself.

Pictures showing progress of the repairs and cleanup were regularly posted on the NMT Path Forward whatsapp thread. Pictures can also be found on the www.nirbanmath.org website.

Acknowledgements:

Have to acknowledge the dedication of **Rahul Biswas** in particular, **Tarun Roychowdhury** and **Abhijit Rakshit** for physically managing all the Nirban Math repairs/upgrades listed above. Help from **Gautum Dasgupta** (Babu) is gratefully acknowledged for providing valuable advice on the structural issues in Shanti Ashram.

Phase 2 repairs:

There are still more repairs to be done which we are calling Phase 2. The main focus in Phase 2 will be the repairs to all the Nirban Math buildings. During these repairs we hope to:

- correct long standing structural defects
- fix water leakage issues
- fix broken windows & doors
- freshen up the buildings with new plaster and paint
- anything else that comes up during inspections

We plan to complete the Phase 2 repairs in 2022. We are now evaluating quotes for the most critical of these repairs. These overall repairs are likely to be of the same scale and cost as the Phase 1 repairs since there are 6 buildings to be fixed up.

Humanitarian Works

The covid situation forced us to take up some humanitarian works and attend to staff welfare as listed below:

- we did 4 rounds of dry provisions/food packets distribution; most of these food distributions were supported from general funds but atleast one sponsored by a donor
- we provided 1.5 lacs direct monetary assistance in response to the Oxygen Emergency

- Noticing that many kids came to the Math in bare feet, we provided keds for all the Balkendra kids. Help from **Kunal Biswas** is gratefully acknowledged in organizing the keds distribution
- Blankets for Balkendra families were provided by the largesse of **Sanjukta Sen** and family
- Jackets for the school staff and sweaters for ground staff were provided as **staff welfare** and in recognition of their dedication during these tough times. **Debdatta** managed the procurement of the blankets, jackets and sweaters from vendors in Calcutta.



Provisions being made ready for distributions



New keds on the Balkendra children

Sewing Classes

We have received a donation to purchase machines and materials to set up sewing classes for some of the local women. A local teacher, who is known to the family, was contacted by Subrata Roy, and has agreed to conduct the classes. About 30 ladies have signed up for classes - they were interviewed by the Instructor for the starting level of skills. The organization of the classes has been done on paper but the classes have not started yet.

Eye Camp

We also received a donation to organize one eye camp, where the locals will be given an eye check up and a pair of eyeglasses if needed. Subrata Roy and Dipankar Duttagupta are coordinating the effort; it will be done as soon as conditions are amenable for such a camp.

General Math Activities

Inspite of the difficult situation caused by Covid, there was plenty of work that the Math continued to do. A monthly list of the activities performed by the Math staff is given in **Appendix 1**. In general the Math activities consisted of:

- daily pujas
- special pujas
- special events
- campus upkeep
- handling of petty cash
-

Cleanup of outside perimeter wall



Steel screen over wells



Dry Provisions prior to distribution to local families.



The mandap dressed up for one of the special pujas

Balkendra

Due to covid, the Balkendra school remained closed through the year. However, It was an opportunity to consider all aspects of Balkendra operations for possible enhancements. So taking advantage of this down time, Anjana Choudhuri has worked with the school staff to enhance:

- Teaching methods
- Curriculum
- Physical environment and
- Classroom Management

The primary motivation for the suggested changes were comments from the teachers themselves that the school had to be more engaging to hold the interest of students and to ensure maximum participation. Details of all the new curricular elements, which were

actually developed by the Teachers themselves are provided in **Appendix 2**.

Following is a picture of the school teachers proudly displaying the new jackets provided by NMT.



Development of the Math

To guide future development of the Math, Anjana Choudhuri has prepared a white paper listing all possible endeavors with their attendant requirements in terms of resources, materials and logistics. After careful review of the list it became obvious that a local coordinator/overseer is needed in order to effectively manage/coordinate/sustain any activity beyond those currently being done. The overseer should be relatively computer savvy with familiarity with email communication and standard office tools. So the development planning has taken a back seat to finding a proper local overseer.

Nirban Math Staff

We cannot thank the Nirban Math staff enough for their dedication during these difficult times. Following is a list of the regular staff and agency hires:

Amit Mitra - campus custodian
B N Bhattejee - pujari
Shirvam Kumar
Anand (Accountant - Deoghar)
Thakur Pandit

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Sweeper
Night Security - agency hire
Balaram-babu (Accountant – Kolkata)

A partial list of activities performed by the ground staff is provided below as Appendix 3. This list was prepared by the Ground staff themselves, at the urging of Anjana Choudhuri, with a view towards developing a comprehensive operations manual for the campus.

In addition to the permanent staff, we also have 5 teachers who have been kept on the payroll through the covid situation. At this time, they help with food and other distribution activities in the Math, in addition to working with Anjana Choudhuri on school set up and preparation.

As you can see from the above description, operation of Nirban Math is a pretty complex affair - the management of the staff and hiring of additional day laborers is handled by Debdatta Biswas.

Purulia

We have obtained some court injunctions but not been successful in stopping encroachment into the Maguria property. Our lawyers from Kolkata are guiding a solicitor in Purulia. However, other than a mutually amicable settlement, it may be difficult to stop further encroachment.

General Communication with Members

Many have raised their heads to help/guide/question Math's development and management. All comments/suggestions/ideas are welcome. To maintain open communication and transparency in the affairs of the Trust, a **quarterly virtual meeting** has been set up. We encourage all to attend these meetings. In addition to the quarterly virtual meetings, the

'NMT Path Forward' whatsapp group has been created for immediate transmission of important news. Hope you see all these as positive developments and get encouraged to provide more active support.

Volunteering

We ardently hope that some of you, especially the next Gen, will take the opportunity to visit our Math, when it is finally safe to do so or to in the meantime volunteer in some capacity.

We thank all the members and well-wishers for their generous donations and support. We continue to seek your blessings, well wishes, feedback, suggestions and your donations.

Let us end with a teaching from THAKUMA:

"Will is at the root of everything. Be it a virtuous or a vicious deed, will is at the root. That you want to know the Truth is your will and that you are occupied with unreal things is also your will. Where there is will there is a way. A **Jiva** can be a **Shiva** by will."

Following are some more pictures showing activities through the year.



A new guest bathroom with western facilities in construction

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One of several dry provision distributions



Observance of Independence Day 2021



A cheque of Rs 25,000 being handed over to civic authorities during the oxygen emergency



Acknowledgement to Nirban Math for humanitarian assistance during Oxygen shortage



A new girder being placed in the ground floor classroom of Shanti Ashram.



Old bricks reclaimed from the grounds



A new underground water tank



The new jaal chaad in Nirban Math being tested by Amit.



Blanket distribution





New steel shelves for securely storing school materials.



Children waiting to be served



One of the covid dry provision distributions. This was timed with new Keds distribution.

Pictures of all activities for 2021 can be seen at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/sAmNtVcaWt9Jaa5g8>

Appendix 1: Monthly List of Math Activities in 2021

Month	Special Activities
January	<p>Pujas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Year Bhog with snacks for Balkendra children - Puja for Miki's new venture (sponsored by Debdatta & Kunal Biswas) <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Republic Day Celebration with lunch for Balkendra children - Dry Provisions to Balkendra families for Covid relief - Dry provisions for Balkendra families (sponsored by Sunu, Bappan) - Lunch for Balkendra children (sponsored by Kutti for Oni/Rachna's 25th) - Breakfast/Lunch for children (sponsored by Bina Shah for Jan 26) - Republic Day chocolates to children (sponsored by Tarun Roychoudhury)
February	<p>Pujas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saraswati Puja and Bhog for children <p>Events:</p>
March	<p>Pujas:</p> <p>Events:</p>
April	<p>Pujas:</p> <p>Events:</p>
May	<p>Pujas:</p> <p>Events:</p>
June	<p>Pujas:</p> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bhog and Dry provision' distribution to Balkendra families (sponsored by Sengupta siblings for Mashimoni's 96th b'day)
July	<p>Pujas:</p> <p>Events:</p>
August	<p>Pujas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independence Day celebrations including lunch for Balkendra children and staff - Bhog and Prasad to Balkendra children (sponsored by Keka Sen & family)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bhog and Prasad to Balkendra children (sponsored by Anjana Chaudhuri & family) Events:
September	Pujas: Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Snacks for Balkendra children in memory of Pratim (sponsored by Babli and her siblings)
October	Pujas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Durga Puja bhogs Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dry Provisions to Balkendra families- Feeding of children (by Kakun for Eddy)- Bog and snacks for children for Khukumamunu's 88th anniversary (by Kunal Biswas family)
November	Pujas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thakumar Tirodhan- Bhog for Bappa's 70th (sponsored by Bubul and family) Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Breakfast snacks for children (sponsored by Nanima, Shiva's grandma)- Dry provisions for Balkendra families (sponsored by Sujit & Shiela Sengupta)
December	Pujas: Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bhog for Dasgupta children (sponsored by Surajit & Joy Dasgupta)

Note that a similar Calendar of Events has been started for 2022. Please call Debdatta Biswas to pre-select a date for special puja or a sponsored puja.

Appendix 2: Balkendra Development

Following are some of the enhancements that will be adopted for Balkendra once the school reopens.

Teaching Method:

It was agreed that learning for all ages is best when learning is concrete and experiential - a touch, feel, see and MAKE experience ... especially so in the case of Balkendra aged children

The suggested teaching method is based on the innate process of learning for children of their age:

“... Help me to do it by myself”, “...help me to think for myself”

Concrete experiential learning would supplement the traditional method in use, to enforce student' engagement and interest.

To provide the needed concrete experiences, teachers spent much of the year in discussions, preparing concrete materials and models, per subject and topic, for class presentations and student construction. Examples of the materials and models created by the teachers are given below.

Not provided here is A Framework illustrating how Phases of this method could be used for remote learning.

Curriculum:

Curriculum remains the same as such but some science elements will be introduced with hands-on experiments to build interest, engagement, understanding and the desire to learn and know more.

Classroom arrangement:

Classroom arrangements have been reconsidered with individual work areas to permit unsupervised activities. Classroom spaces have also been rethought to accommodate covid restrictions.

Storage:

Storage areas with new shelving have been created to provide adequate accommodation for materials and supplies.

Physical Environment:

Recent repairs and upgrades to furniture and Shanti Ashram are for purposes of safety and to mitigate classroom conditions during the heat of summer.

In the future, after Balkendra returns to normal operation, Cameras can be considered for installation in the classrooms to permit remote monitoring.

Balkendra Forms and Policies:

Standardized forms related to student Registration Cards, teacher profiles, teacher responsibilities, Annual Calendar format, and other aspects have been developed. Master copies of these forms are kept on one of the Balkendra PCs.

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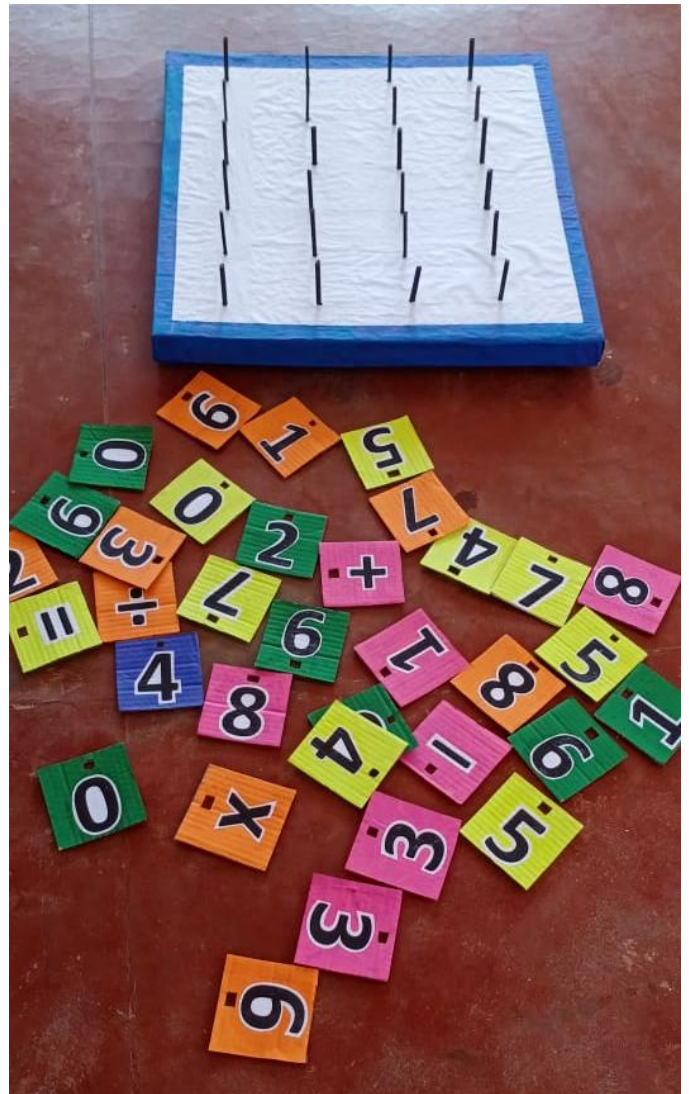
Unfortunately, Covid restrictions have not permitted us to introduce these new practices. Our appreciation to Teachers for their cooperation and excitement with all new ideas and additions.

Enormous thanks to Amit Mitra, our overall custodian at the site, for his help at every turn related to Balkendra, Nirban Math, and other aspects of the upkeep of the whole campus.

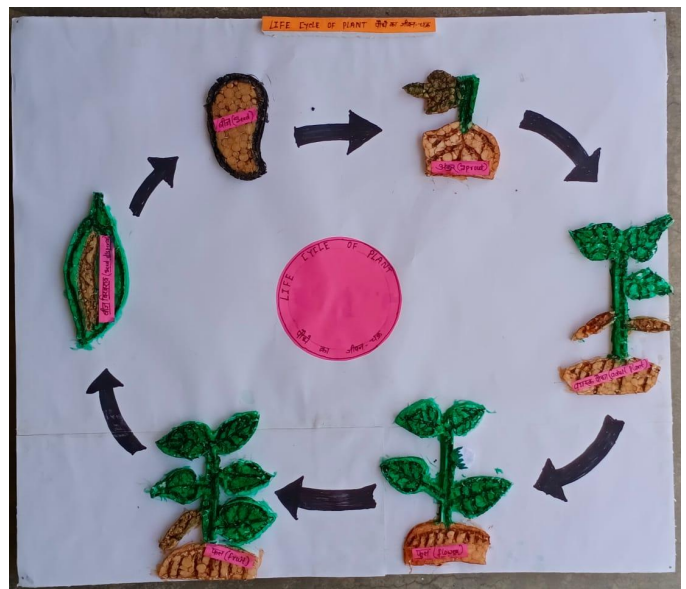
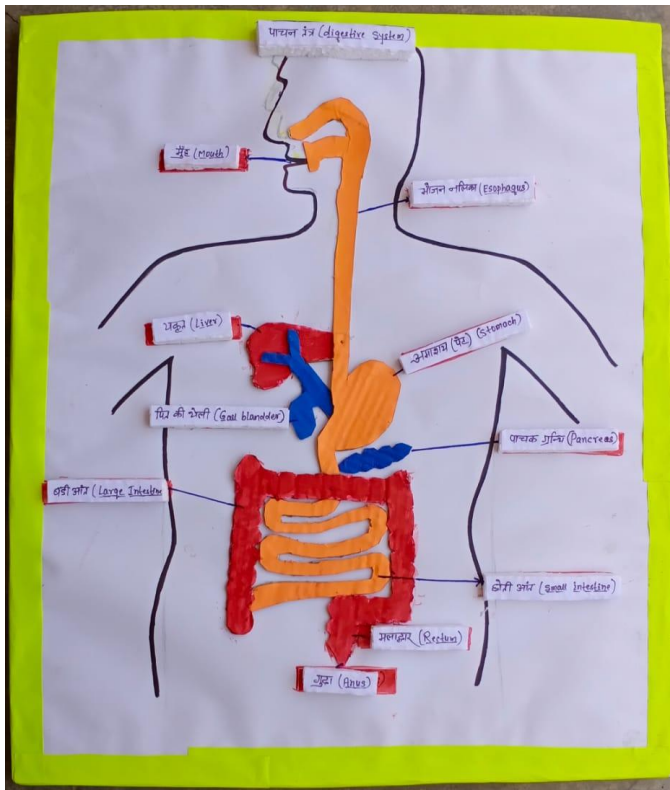
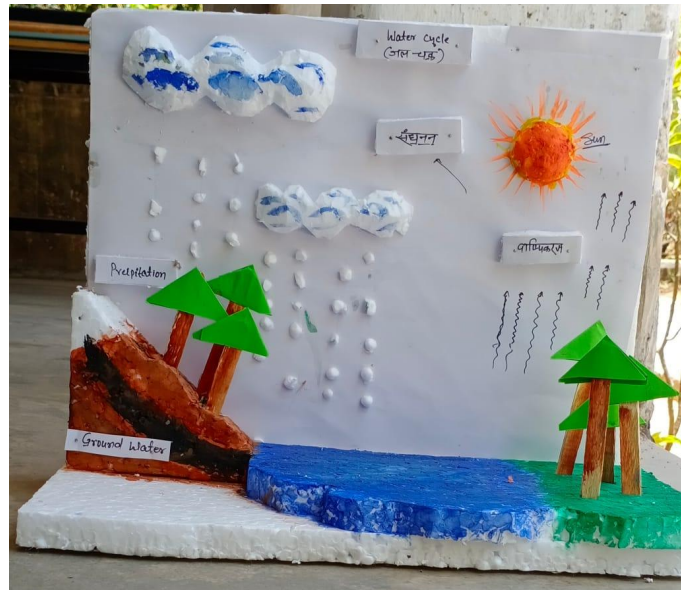
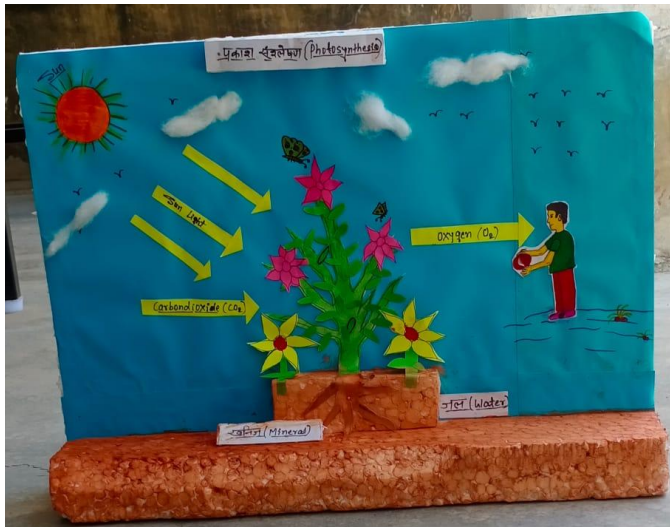
Together, Amit Mitra and the teachers are a happy, hard working band! They are the machines that make things work. They wait for things to return to normal.



Examples of Materials prepared by the Teachers for Math demonstrations.



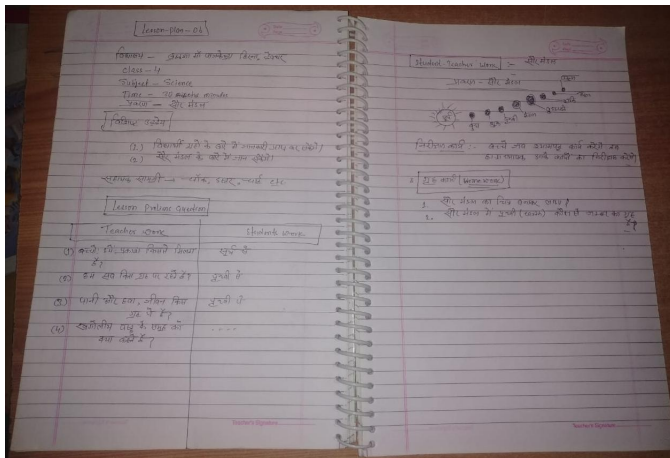
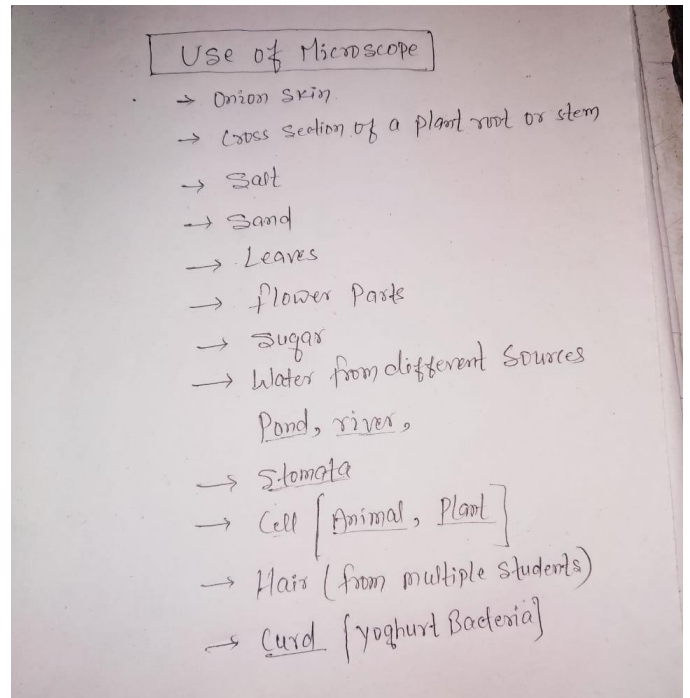
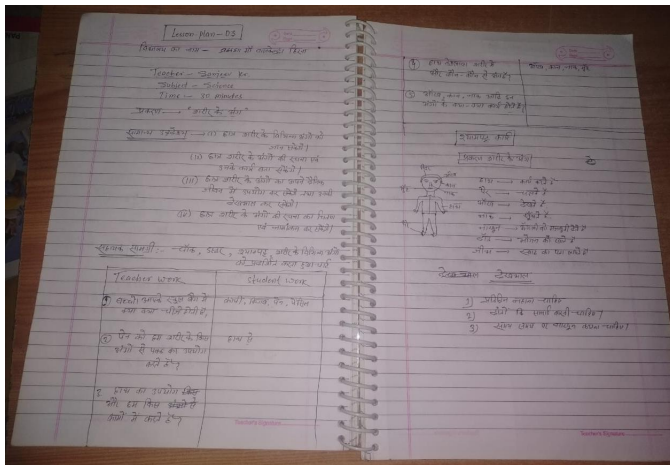
Examples of Materials prepared by the Teachers for Science demonstrations.



Similar Materials were created for Language demonstrations

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Examples of Lesson Plans prepared by the Teachers



Appendix 3: Partial List of activities performed by Ground Staff

(shown for Amit Mitra and Biswanath Bhattacharya only - similar roster of activities has been made for each staff position)

SNO	AMIT MITRA.	Nirban math trust. (Deoghar) Jharkhand.
1.	Daily work Responsibilities.	<p><u>MORNING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">① working as a watchman during the day.② To go and work where I need to.③ Gardening for an hour. <p><u>AFTERNOON</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">① working as a watchman during the day② cooking for myself. scrub your dishes and clean the room. worship, eat and rest for an hour. <p><u>EVENING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">① working as a watchman during the day.② Installing a pump for watering the garden. If it rain, you don't have to install a pump.③ playing temple songs. All doors are checked and locked. All lights are on.④ I watch TV for one and a half hours. <p><u>NIGHT</u></p> <p>To make God's duty to share at night. cooking for yourself. After midnight the two of them share and sleep.</p>
②	Festival Responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">① At that time, from the role of the guard to complete various kinds of work while maintaining cleanliness.② Booking all things. Bringing goods from the market.

<p>विकल्पवर्षी ड्यूटीसो विनिर्देश सोडवणु (14353)</p>	
<p>1. Daily Responsibilities (Morning)</p>	<p>प्रातः ७:३० च्या सुमारास शाळेचे प्रवेशद्वार उघड करणे. सर्व शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षक शाळेचे प्रवेश करणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे.</p>
<p>Afternoon. →</p>	<p>दुपारचे Sneeper व रक्षी काम शाळेचे प्रवेशद्वार उघड करणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे.</p>
<p>Evening →</p>	<p>शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे.</p>
<p>Night →</p>	<p></p>
<p>2. Monthly Responsibilities</p>	<p>सहाय्यक शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे.</p>
<p>3. Festival Responsibilities</p>	<p>शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे. शाळेचे कर्मचारी व शिक्षकांचे वेतन वगैरे काढणे.</p>

