

BINAPANI ASHRAM

**20th. Annual Tree Plantation and Monsoon Celebration
28 July, 2019**

Every year girls of Binapani Ashram make the last Sunday of July, a very special festive day by planting trees and celebrating monsoon. The girls call it, "*Briksharopon-Barshamongal Utsav*", one of the most enjoying events of the school going girls. Binapani Ashram celebrated its 20th Tree Plantation and Monsoon Celebration on 28th July, 2019 on *Bela Basu Open Stage*, located within the Ashram premises. The stage was beautifully decorated by the girls, under the leadership of their teachers displaying paper craft and origami wonders, giving loud message... '*Plant trees, save earth*'. Ms. Papia Barman, History teacher, Kaijuli Girls' High School, Birbhum, an author and a renowned orator graced the occasion as guest-in-chief. Dr. Rahi Soren, Faculty member from the School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University presided over the function. The Chief guest and the President of the ceremony were formally received by the girls with flowers and colourful scarves, following the tribal custom, called 'Dobo'.

The programme commenced with welcome address by Dr. S. Bhattacharya, Chairman of the institution. He presented a brief report on the background history of Tree planting ceremony in Binapani Ashram and its implication among the tribal families. A message from Prof. Spooner Hart, Entomologist, Environmentalist and long standing well wisher of Binapani Ashram encouraged the girls for organising such wonderful event of environmental awareness. Dr. Bhattacharya read out the message sent by Dr. Spooner Hart on the occasion of Briksharopon and Monsoon celebration.

The first half, nearly one and half hours was devoted to Tree plantation ceremony, commencing with the formal tree plantation in a decorated earthen pot, on the stage by Ms. Barman, the Chief Guest of the function. The actual plantation was preceded by narrating quotes from Tagore's writing, regarding the importance of earth, air, water, fire, and sunlight in the life of plants which in turn support all living creatures on the earth. After the plantation, all the girls from junior and middle school, beautifully dressed in red bordered yellow sarees came dancing with green leaves in their little hands, singing Tagore songs, welcoming the saplings on the earth. This was followed by presentation of fruit tree saplings to the guardians of the resident girls, who mostly belong to the farmer community. The saplings are mostly grafted fruit trees and ornamental plants, received free of cost from Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya. It is mandatory for all the girls, accommodated in Ashram hostel to plant at least one tree each year in their village home. This programme was followed by the prize giving ceremony. Good number of Ashram girls received prizes and certificates for showing proficiency in education and cultural training. The prizes were earmarked as follows:

1. Best girl of the Ashram, 2. Securing highest marks in the Madhyamik exam.3.Securing highest marks in Life Science, 4. Best Singer award, 5.Best Speaker on science topics and 6. Proficiency in Computer application.

The first part of the programme ended with an eloquent and affectionate deliberation from the Chief Guest, Ms.Papia Barman. She told how she became associated with Binapani Ashram and her interactions with Manjusree during the last few years. The bondage of friendship between Manjusree and Ms. Barman unfurled magnificently in the publication of a book, entitled '*Nivrita Nakshatra*' by the latter. Manjusree has been depicted as an exceptional social tribal activist who devoted her life for promotion of education, health care and cultural emancipation of the girl child, especially among the tribal and the underprivileged. President of the occasion, Dr.Rahi Soren , described her association with Binapani Ashram long back, when she was a P.G. student in Zoology. She not only visited the Ashram, but also stayed with the girls, talking and sharing their experiences in learning. She further, stressed the importance of conservation and protection of animals and plants and emphasised on the menace of manmade environmental pollution which is leading to a devastating situation for the life on earth during coming century.

The second half of the programme covered monsoon celebration, a wonderfully articulated sequence of Tagore songs and dances, depicting the beauty of monsoon and its impact on nature and the lives of people. Mr. Kuntal Chakraborty, the music teacher offered lead to his young girl students rendering their voices for dozens of Tagore songs, written on monsoon. The former students of Binapani Ashram also took active parts in dancing and singing. Ashram authority welcomed their participation with the present students.

The function concluded with vote of thanks by Manjusree Saren, Secretary, Binapani Ashram. Besides, giving thanks to all the visitors, organisers, musicians and staff members she also asked the guardians of the resident children to take care of the young plants they received as gifts from Ashram. She further reminded the guardians that as she is taking care of their daughters they should reciprocate by grooming the young saplings to become a big tree in their respective backyards. Thus the earth will be greener, the main objective of our programme.

All the invitees along with the resident girls , teachers and staff members of Binapani Ashram, more than three hundred people enjoyed a community lunch after the programme.

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