Development Research and Action Group (DRAG) works among deprived communities. It shifted its educational activities from Kusumpur Pahari, an outlying slum of Vasant Vihar, to Mohan Garden in west Delhi in 1998-1999. It acquired land in 1998 and built the DRAG Vikas School. This was made possible by the Japanese government grant given for constructing the school building.

Both the School and the Women’s Centre have been supported financially by Essel Social Welfare Foundation for the last 20 years.

Essel Foundation was started in 1999. It is a non-profit organisation that supports development activities. Its vision is to build an inclusive society where both economic welfare and social well-being co-exist. Its strategy is to partner Delhi-based organisations with a similar vision and work towards sustainable development of the marginalised communities. Its areas of intervention are: Women empowerment, health, education, community development, economic empowerment, equal opportunities, i.e. supporting inclusive education which includes the visually impaired.

Previously DRAG also received funding from government, private welfare organisations, foreign governments and individual donations.

DRAG Vikas Kendra School

DRAG Vikas Kendra School was established in 2002 in Mohan Garden, West Delhi, for the children of migrant workers. At that time there were very few schools in the area and DRAG Vikas Kendra School fulfilled a need. Over the years the school has come up with innovative activities for the children combined with education. It also provides vocational training for young adults in IT, stitching / tailoring and beauty culture, martial arts/self-defence also tuition in maths and English. The principal of the school is Mrs. Madhu Aggarwal.

Below is a breakup of the staff and the class in which they teach:

**No. of staff - 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mrs. Madhu Aggarwal</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gudiya Devi</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sapta Matlotia</td>
<td>K.G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mamta Bisht (Vice Principal)</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shweta Tiwari</td>
<td>IIInd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ansheela Shakya</td>
<td>IIIrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pooja Kumari</td>
<td>IVth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pooja Gairola</td>
<td>Vth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shama Malik</td>
<td>Afternoon Tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sarvesh Mathur</td>
<td>Afternoon Tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Simran Kaur</td>
<td>Beauty Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shivani Verma</td>
<td>Stitching and Tailoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Himansh</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Arun Shrivastav (SSMI)</td>
<td>Computer (Afternoon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rahul Sharma</td>
<td>Computer (Morning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Yuvraj</td>
<td>Martial arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Akram sheikh</td>
<td>Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ram Prakash</td>
<td>Watchman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Archana Narwal</td>
<td>Helper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakup of children enrolled in the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Current Students</th>
<th>Students who left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>K.G.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>IInd</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>IIInd</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>IIIrd</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>IVth</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Vth</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Afternoon Tuition (nursery to IInd)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Afternoon Tuition (IIInd to Vth)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Spoken English</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Maths Tuition</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VOCATIONAL COURSES:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
<th>Current Students</th>
<th>Certificates Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Computer Morning</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Computer (SSMI)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Beauty Culture</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Stitch and Tailoring</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Aerobics</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activities

- In the new academic session fresh registers were made for the new students students in each class.
- 200-250 new admissions were made in various classes.
- Two trips to the DRAG Farm in Manger, Haryana were organized by Patricia Montalto. She took 12 students and two teachers to create sculptures using natural materials found at the farm.
- Teachers changed their display boards and classroom charts from time to time.
- The display boards photos featuring the activities carried out were changed by me.
- Once a month the teachers visited neighbouring families to promote DRAG and search for new students.
- The third year of the Scholarship program helped 38 students to benefit from it and so continue studies in their school.
- I issued the following certificates in this period :
  - In Stitching and Tailoring Sahiba Parveen, Julie, Priyanka, Jyoti, Kajal and Parul received certificates
  - In the computer section Amit Yadav, Kajal Yadav, Neelam, Poonam, Mahima Shukla and Sneha received certificates.
- Annual exams were held of class I to class V.

Achievements:-

- Patricia Montalto organized a novel fashion show based on disposable kitchen items. The girls from DRAG Women’s Centre stitched the dresses using disposable kitchen items and the children played music with the help of kitchen utensils and cereals.
SSMI in Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi, started their new E-literacy project in the DRAG School. They trained one teacher through a literacy app and provided all facilities related to the program. This is a free course for DRAG students in order to make learning easier for them.

DRAG staff saved two students, Silky and Neeru’s life with the help of Soni Singh mam and Madhuri Verma mam from JDVC, Karol Bagh. Their intervention helped to hospitalise them in time and to provide proper treatment. They had both contracted T.B. Silky was in a critical condition when our mam got her treated and saved her life. Now, she is perfectly fine.

In the short-term course we started a self-defence martial arts course for students.

Challenges for the School:-

- Free education provided by Govt. Schools and neighbouring NGO’s along with additional facilities attracts students.
- Many parents are tenants and shift their base in accordance with their work without informing us so the children have to leave.
- Parents prefer sending the male child to school but not the daughters.
- Untrained teachers open tuition centres charging a nominal fee which draws students.
- Parents’ involvement is minimal and their main focus is to get everything free. They do not realize the value of good education. It is difficult to give them advice and to communicate with them.

New Purchases and Maintenance:-

- Office furniture
- Purchase of new curtains and installation of curtain rod in the office
- Beauty products
- School stationery
- Cement pots for eco-garden
- Computer parts
- LED bulbs (7) and tube-lights (2)
- Ceiling fan for computer class (under SSMI)
- Maintenance of sewing-machines and computers
- Installation of electric point in computer-class (Under SSMI)
- Maintenance of electricity points in school building.
- Maintenance of electric-points in building of school
- Maintenance and repair work of the roof.
- Basket ball frame was fixed in the eco-garden for practice.
- Installation of Router for office use.
Application submitted for water connection for the school.

Visitor’s and purpose:-

- Mr. Aseem Tiwari came to conduct English classes
- Siddo Deva, was chief guest at fashion show
- Hitesh Giri from Essel Social Welfare Foundation came for routine inspection.
- Priya Vari Sen, Hon. Secretary of DRAG came to check school functioning.
- Soni Singh, lawyer and volunteer came to assess the Scholarship program students.
- Vijay Laxmi, Gurdeep Kaur, Mangal (SSMI) came to start their literacy project and to do routine inspection.
- Mohit Tomar and Vineet Bansal gave money to two families for groceries for the duration of one year
- Himanshi from SSMI came to give “life skills” counseling to the students in the e-learning program.
- Abhilash Kumar, C.A. of SSMI’s project came to check financial statements of the program.
- Shivani Yadav, head of Women’s Centre and I went to Essel Foundation twice:
  - Firstly, to submit last year’s Annual report of both the school and the centre (April-2018 to March-2019) and to receive the grant for the new session.
  - Secondly, on behalf of Gautam Vohra sir to give Mr. Hitesh Giri and Mrs. Nayyar the book “DRAG and Women Empowerment” and other writings by Dr. Gautam Vohra.
- I went with Shivani Yadav to the BSES office in Hari Nagar to tackle the meter issue and challan which is pending.
- Priyanka Sharma from Essel foundation visited the school twice. Once to carry out school inspection and secondly for the Diwali festival.
- I went to Bal Sahyog in Connaught place to attend the Diwali Mela and our tailoring students made shopping bags out of old clothes, which Shivani Yadav and her team sold to discourage use of plastic bags.
- Tarshito a famous Italian artist visited the school along with Nimal Thadani, Jacqueline, Punita Malhotra, Mrs. Sharma, Mrs. Goyal and BAAS trust team. He gave a spiritual speech and rang the bells in honour of the ancestors. Patricia mam brought 4 big sizes canvases on which all the guests and the students painted together to show that we are all one.
- Inder K. Adlakha from Manav Kalyan Sewa Samiti visited the school and donated some clothes for toddlers.
- I, along with 2 teachers and 12 students, went to the BAAS Trust, Haryana to participate in a competition. The students recited the poem “Imagine” by John Lennon. After the competition a foot ball match was organized by the Trust which we all enjoyed.

New Appointments:-

- Ansheela Shakya was appointed Class III teacher as Jeenat Parveen resigned after her marriage.
Himansh Kumar took charge of the English Speaking Course after Roshan resigned as he got a government job in Bihar.

Arun Shrivastav joined as computer teacher of SSMI’s E-Learning Program

Aaryan started Aerobics and Yoga classes under the Short-term Course

Neha was appointed teacher of the stitching and tailoring class in the morning as many new students this course.

Yuvraj joined as self-defense trainer

Festivals and Celebrations:-

- On International Yoga Day students learnt yoga along with an explanatory talk on how regular yoga practice helped them to stay fit.
- Independence day - Flag-hoisting ceremony and a patriotic and cultural program. Snacks were distributed to students
- Janmashtmi - Cultural and devotional program with crisps and biscuits distributed to students at the end.
- Teachers day - Students assumed the role of teachers and took classes. Refreshments were distributed to students and a pen set to the staff.
- Diwali - a cultural program was organised, worship of goddess Laxmi and distribution of snacks.
- Christmas - little kids wore Santa outfits and went around the Christmas tree singing Jingle Bells. Chocolates were distributed.
- Republic Day - the National Flat was hoisted and a patriotic function was organized. Parle-G biscuits and crisps were distributed to students.
- Holi – Everyone joined in playing Holi, with organic and herbal colours. Patricia mam was part of Holi celebration.

Note: School is currently closed due to Covid-19 (corona virus) from 18 March 2020 onwards. School will remain shut till 14th April, 2020. Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. The solution to prevent and slow down transmission is to practice social distancing and be well-informed about the virus. Hence our government has declared a 21 day lock down all over India with strict instructions not to open schools, institutes and shops during this period.

(Mrs.Madhu Aggarwal)
(Principal)
DRAG Vikas Kendra
**DRAG Women’s Centre**

### Name of Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shivani Yadav</td>
<td>Centre Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shweta Tyagi</td>
<td>Stitching &amp; Tailoring Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vinita Babbar</td>
<td>Beauty Culture Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pooja Kumari</td>
<td>Computer Teacher (Morning Shift)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kiran</td>
<td>Computer Teacher (Afternoon Shift)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Manoj Arya</td>
<td>Yoga Teacher (Short Term Course) April-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jyoti Kumari</td>
<td>Beauty Culture Teacher (Short Term Course) July-December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Prashant Mishra</td>
<td>English Teacher (Short Term Course) January-March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Anjali</td>
<td>Sweeper &amp; Office Helper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Completion of Courses and Certificates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO.</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Total no. of Enrolment</th>
<th>Current Students</th>
<th>Students who left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stitching &amp; Tailoring</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Beauty Culture</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Computer Morning Shift</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Computer Afternoon Shift</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Short term Courses</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Stitching and Tailoring Certificates:**

• **Computer Certificates:**

• **Beauty Culture Certificates:**

➢ **Events and visits:**
  
  • I along with our Beauty Culture teacher Mrs. Vinita visited the DRAG School to attend the event organized in honour of international artist Mr Tarshito. It was a wonderful experience for us. Ms. Patricia, Mr Tarshito, Ms Soni Singh, Punita Khanna and other guests were also present. Mr Tarshito shared his philosophy of how art promotes unity, love and happiness.

  • On 16th October, 2019, we had organized a Mehendi competition in DRAG Women Centre. Students of the Beauty Culture class participated in the Mehendi competition. Ms Patricia was the chief guest for the occasion and she presented a prize to the winners.

  • In the month of October, 2019, I along with our Stitching & Tailoring teacher Ms. Shweta Tyagi participated in the Diwali Mela organized by Bal Sahyog. We got a chance to interact with volunteers from others NGOs. We had our own stall of bags made by our students and we also sold some.

  • In the month of December, 2019, DRAG Women Centre had organized the much awaited fashion show ‘East Meets West’ under the guidance of Ms Patricia. The theme of this fashion show was to showcase dresses made by recycling old clothes like sarees etc. Students showed their creative skills by making lovely dresses. The chief guest Ms. Madhavi Verma, Principal of Janki Devi Vocational Centre, graced the event and
distributed prizes to the participating students. She also explained to the students of DRAG Women Centre how they could use the skills they had learnt to start their own business. The students enjoyed this event and are looking forward to more such events at the Centre.

➢ **Other Activities:**

- Under the guidance of Patricia Montalto, the students of DRAG Women Centre held a fashion of dresses recycled from old sarees. This project taught the women how to recycle old clothes and make stylish dresses.

- Mrs Madhuri Verma, Principal of Janki Devi Vocational Centre, who was the chief guest at the fashion show, motivated our students. She shared with them innovations in the field of design and stitching and also gave them some ideas of how to start their own businesses and get bank loans.

- A special class on makeup & skin testing along with nail art was held for beauty culture students by Mrs. Ritulika, beauty specialist.

- We had an information campaign on the vocational courses offered at the DRAG Women Centre in our local area.

- MCD Officials visited the centre to educate the women and students about the menace of dengue and chikungunya, how to tackle disease and the treatment recommended.

- Mr. Anurag Tomar, an MCD official and his team campaign visited DRAG Women Centre told the students about Coronavirus precautions and health tips.

- Ms. Priyanka from Excel Foundation came to DRAG Women Centre with new ideas like community mobilization, beneficiary of who needs spoken english etc. and undertaken the inspection of the DRAG Women Centre.

➢ **Visitors to the Women’s Centre:**

- Mrs. Patricia Montalto
- Ms. Priya Sen, Honorary Secretary
- Mrs. Soni Singh, Lawyer at the Delhi High Court.
- Mrs. Madhuri Verma, Principal of Janki Devi College.
Mrs. Madhu Agarwal, Principal of DRAG Vikas Kendra.
Mrs. Ritulika, beauty specialist.
Mrs. Annu Kumar, Health Advisor.
Mr. Hitesh Giri, from Essel Foundation.
Mr. Anurag Tomar from MCD along with his team.
Mr. Vinod from Usha Sewing Machine had come to DRAG Women Centre.
Mrs. Priyanka Sharma from Essel Foundation.

➢ **Celebrations:**

- All the students of DRAG Women Centre celebrated the festival of light Diwali with much of joy and happiness. We also decorated our DRAG Women Centre with lamps and lights and wished each other a lot of prosperity. We also shared sweets brought by the students on the auspicious occasion of Diwali.

- On 12th November, 2019, which happened to be the Gurunanak Jyanti, all the students and staff members come together to celebrate the birth of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak. We organized a community-langar (community-lunch) at DRAG Women Centre and spread the preachings of Guru Nanak of the equality of all people, regardless of their caste, religion or gender.

- Christmas was celebrated with all enthusiasm among the students and staff members of DRAG Women Centre. On the occasion of Christmas, we all greeted each other ‘Merry Christmas’ along with the decorations at our centre. We also told the students about the world-wide celebrations of Christmas.

- All the staff members and students welcomed the new year 2020 by passing on the personalized ‘New Year Greeting Cards’ to each other. We also undertake the new year resolution to empower ourselves with new learnings.

- The most colorful and vibrant festival holi, we celebrated this year eco-friendly holi with flowers. All staff, students and patrica ma’am enjoyed the most beautiful festival.

➢ **Repair-work undertaken at the Centre:**

- Repair and servicing of sewing machines.
- Water motor service and repair.
- White-wash and paint got done at the Centre.
➢ **Achievements:**

Increasing number of students is one achievement. The past year doing various activities students has learnt about makes dresses using waste materials. Students also learnt bridal mehndi designs, Computer knowledge - as a result of which they are earning good money by doing it professionally.

Above all, many of the students have got jobs and many are working independently with the knowledge imparted by DRAG Women Centre which is helping in elevating the quality of life of students attending the DRAG Women Centre.

**DRAG Women Centre Total Fees Collection = 1,40,300/-**

➢ **Expenditure:**

1. Electricity Bill = 7,464/-
2. Airtel Bill = 2,650/-
3. Jal Board Bill = 12,626/-
4. General Expense = 8,050/-
5. Other Expense = 39,310/-

Grand Total = 70,100/

Difference Amount = 70,200/-

**Report Submitted by**

**Shivani Yadav**  
Centre - Head  
DRAG Women’s Centre.  
A-30, Mohan Garden,  
Uttam Nagar, Delhi-59
**DRAG Scholarship Scheme**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>No. of Boys</th>
<th>No. of Girls</th>
<th>DRAG Funding</th>
<th>Contribution to DRAG for scholarship</th>
<th>Total Spent Rs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5,80,289</td>
<td>79,123</td>
<td>6,59,412</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,36,015</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2,55,410</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,10,983</td>
<td>18,250</td>
<td>1,29,233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soni Singh, a lawyer by profession, took charge of the Scholarship Scheme in 2016. In view of the deplorable condition of some families, it was decided to give scholarships to some deserving children to continue their education in regular schools.

Specific criteria was fixed for the selection of children, however the main criteria that we developed to shortlist the forms were ‘capability’ and ‘need’.

Soni Singh visits the School once every month to assess the progress of the scholarship students.

Below are the details of the eligibility criteria and guidelines/procedure of the scheme :

**Eligibility & Terms:**

1. The Applicant must be pursuing /pursued a course at DRAG Vikas Kendra, Mohan Garden or DRAG Women’s Centre (“DRAG”).
2. Scholarship / Grant will be given for completing School education to students of Class V and above.
3. The Scholarship / Grant would be limited to school tuition fee and course books for one school year, which will be released by way of Cheque / Transfer directly in the name of concerned school. School uniform / other charges may be funded for some students at the discretion of DRAG.
4. Scholarship recipients of last year need to apply again if they wish to avail the scholarship.
5. Admission of the students in schools of their choice is not the responsibility of DRAG.
6. If the terms of the Grant are not adhered to, DRAG is entitled to stop the Grant at any time during the period of the Grant.
7. Progress of Scholarship recipients shall be assessed by DRAG representatives from time to time at its discretion.

In the first year, out of 84 applications, 44 applicants were shortlisted for interview. After the first round of interviews of 44 candidates, 24 were shortlisted for the second round. After the second round, we finally shortlisted 16.

The scholarship budget in the second year was 2,50,000 and 16 students were given scholarships. In the third year the budget was 6,50,000 and 38 students were awarded scholarships.
In 2019-2020, 38 children received funding support. In the coming year we would like to give scholarships to at least the same number of students.

Soni Singh
In-charge scholarship scheme

The DRAG Farm, Manger, Haryana

It was such an achievement setting up the DRAG farm in 1997 and after. We managed to tackle the legal and infrastructural hassles, deal with villagers and staff. Initially we grew vegetables but thereafter we chose to plant trees – fruit, fodder and fuelwood trees. This is typical Aravalli scrub forest. The land is dry, rocky and requires a lot of physical work and machinery to level the land and make it fit for planting crops and vegetables. And forests are the need of the hour. The trees have grown huge and shelter birds, animals, bees (so important). In the early years we used to get neelgai but because land here has been sold and city dwellers have gobbled up land, the neelgai has retreated to safer pastures. We do get partridges, owls, peacocks and many smaller birds that have made the farm home. We also have visitors like porcupine that gnaw the tree trunks and destroy the tree. The DRAG forest stands out and its towering trees can be seen from afar.

This year we have planted jamun and citrus trees. In the monsoon we get mushrooms, however we do not eat them as it is dangerous, but they look so pretty. And there are two massive beehives. It was interesting to witness their evolution – there were a lot of bees and the hives grew bigger and bigger, then for some reason the bees abandoned the hives which gradually turned white from dark brown and pieces fell off.

We also bring children from the DRAG school to the farm so they can have a picnic, do some sculptures from the natural materials lying around and enjoy nature that so contrasts with their normal habitat. They come and hug the trees, climb them make sculptures from the fallen branches and twine. Two trips were made this year by the school children and the sculptures created. Two years back they had painted the rocks and the walls into a colourful splendour.

An excerpt from Gautam Vohra’s book:

“A 100 metres before the road dips sharply into the village, a brown, bedraggled geedar [jackal] crossed the Bolero’s path to be followed at its heels by a fawn-coloured, brownish magnificent nilgai. They were running as if someone was after them. May be a poacher had frightened them.
There had not been any sound of an explosion. Blasting for building materials in the Aravallis has been banned for over a year by a Supreme Court order.”

We had also conducted adult education classes in the initial years. Let us remember this is a gujjar village, where the status of women is low. An excerpt from The Diary of an Organic Farmer:

Adult Education Report, Manger: This is the second month of the AE class. The total number of students is 20. Most of the learners now recognize the alphabet. They are in the process of learning to join two or three letters and are able to do so and some have begun to write their names. There are a few though who do not yet know all the letters of the alphabet but are eager to learn. During the end of the month the number of students declined as they left the village to cut the wheat crop wherever they own land.....“

Priya Sen
Hon. Secretary