

REPORT ON VISIT TO ASHA MUMBAI CENTRE

[Visited & reported by Ashish Dasgupta]

Visited ASHA Mumbai Centre on **16 May 2018**, located near IITB, Powai Main Gate. The number of students was less (out of total about 120 students) due to summer holidays and classes are being held only in the afternoon. Dr. Smita Puniyani asked me to come around 3.30 PM. When I reached the Centre at 3.15 PM, the center was already in operation – a few young volunteers were holding English classes of different level. Rekha Madam who looks after the center activities received me and we started conversing on the center. And soon, Dr. Smita Puniyani joined us. Stress was being given for English and spoken English during summer holidays as the students registered with Govt. schools are generally weak in English, I was told.

I went around the classes and interacted with the students as well as the young volunteer teachers (girls and boys from colleges). Santosh, an ex-student and presently a teacher, was taking me around. The children were visibly happy and enjoying their classes; the teachers were absorbed in teaching. I interacted with a few students and all of them expressed their love and attraction towards the center – they do not even want to leave the center beyond scheduled hours, as gathered. The classes were equipped with blackboards, chairs with adjoined writing tables, table & benches, Computers, notepads, books in library, etc.

The best out of the children comes out depending on individual strength and weakness as well as their aptitude, as explained by Smita Madam. One student Lokesh who used to have no interest in the class room teaching, is now an expert in Defense Martial Arts; he now teaches Martial Arts to Asha students as a volunteer. Govind joined Asha center as an infant and he now looks after the center admin.

Sense of discipline, teamwork, positive attitude and human values are instilled in the mind of children, as observed. The center was vibrant, atmosphere was congenial and children looked inspired and self-reliant. The teacher student relation observed cordial. The former students regularly keep in touch and they are of big strength to the center. It gave me a feeling of a cohesive group.

I went to another establishment where Anita Madam was holding spoken English classes. Children of age group 13 to 15 were seen sitting together and conversing in English. Anita Madam asked one of them to give extempore lecture – she picked up three topics from a box and spoke for 3/4 minutes on each of them. Madam is also a Counselor to the students.

On 19 May I made another visit to the center and witnessed the display of the Robot made by ASHA children Satyam and Dheeraj, who have just passed out and pursuing B. Sc. Course. It was made in-house including the Software and was operated remotely from their Smartphone. Met the teachers Suranjan Sen and Abhishek Kumar, both PhD from IITB, and had a brief discussion about the students and teaching in general.



From L to R: Lokesh, Rekha Madam, Dr, Smita Puniyani, Ashish and Santosh



ASHA students with two young teachers and Santosh



Computer Lab



One of the class rooms



Another class room – Students and the volunteer teacher from the St. Xavier's college



Chart made by English class students of Anita Madam



VERB Chart made by English class students of Anita Madam – name of the students are written at the bottom



A student speaking extempore in the Spoken English class – Anita Madam is watching her presentation.

Overall it was a pleasure to see the efforts of the center management and the way children are coming up to get integrated with the main stream of the society.

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