

## **Lingapuram Report by Viswa Ammula**

### ***From Siri foundation – “Supporting Education at the grassroots level”***

While India continues to push towards addressing the much needed infrastructure in most metropolitan cities, you get the feeling that as soon you land in any major airports, you are greeted by a sign that reads “Welcome to India – under construction”. As it continues to become a major player in the global economic scene, India is being hailed as a potential next super power, or an economic engine that will surpass China in the next decade etc. In spite of all the accolades, it continues to fail in creating the much needed socio-economic change that is essential to creating the leaders of tomorrow.

India has the resilience that most countries do not have. This can be a pro or con depending on the perception of the reader. Even a major terrorist bombing does not bring the biggest city on its knees, it continues to function delivering the basic necessities to its citizens. The people consider this as part of life and accept it and do not feel obligated to addressing the system and leave it up to the political personalities. Is it the system or the extreme democracy that is a curse and not a boon? Could it be that we need stronger leaders as chiefs as the private sector seems to be making huge headways in creating growth?

I have personally learnt that leadership is not about telling people what to do; it is about inspiring others to do more; in leading by example and in creating sustainable solutions and systems that can continue to function without having major drivers behind them all the time. While we can continue to talk about the inefficiencies in the political system in India and how it is failing to address some of the most common issues, we can also choose to get inspired to do our part in addressing education which can bring the socio-economic change, a method that has been proven many a times.

Siri foundation, which was established in 2010 by a group of like minded volunteers, took the initiative to work with Asha for education, a globally recognized and respected charity organization, towards creating value for a school in a remote village called Lingapuram in Northwest Andhra Pradesh. The motto was to support education at the grassroots level. The school was visited by Viswa Ammula, a volunteer resident of Kansas City, USA, and an ardent supporter of Siri and Asha, to monitor the progress and to meet its dedicated on the ground volunteers.

It is seldom that you are blessed with a team of volunteers that are willing to put forth the selfless work of supporting the beliefs of Siri on the ground. One of the mentionable details is that all of them are teachers by profession and have been for all their lives and understand the nuances of creating and making the objectives met. It is also interesting to note that one of the key supporters and volunteers of Siri, practically lives in the house next door to the school sharing a compound wall. I have had the opportunity to meet all of them and discuss the primary objectives of Siri, the influence of Asha on the project(s) and in maximizing value with each one of the objectives.

The Visit:

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

By – Viswa Ammula – [viswa.ammula@gmail.com](mailto:viswa.ammula@gmail.com), cell - +1 816-728-0720

Location – Lingapuram School, NW Andhra Pradesh.

Accompanied by on site volunteers – LVN Rao, Babu Rao, L.Satyanarayana, Y.Satyanarayana, C.Appalanaidu

Foundation website – [www.sirifoundation.org](http://www.sirifoundation.org)

Endorsed by – [www.ashanet.org](http://www.ashanet.org)

Project – Adoption of Lingapuram School

Tasks:

- Basic building renovation
- Provide electricity to the classrooms for lights and fans
- Provide basic teaching aids and school supplies
- Create a library space
- Provide relevant books, furniture and other knowledge aid supplies
- Create and funs after school programs



The school and Siri volunteers organized a meeting and a forum to discuss the potential projects. We also had the opportunity to involve the village, the school teachers and the local political office bearers and a district school official in an effort to bring the most visibility to the work that Siri is doing and plans on committing in the coming

months/year. Siri believes in the fact that *"It takes a village to raise a child"* a popular proverb with a clear message. It is appropriate here as it pertains to making the entire community/village to play a critical role in the growth and development of its young people and their little minds. The community that is referred to here is both internal and external like the parents of the children, the school authorities, the teachers, the local political influencers and all the volunteers.

Even though this was my first visit to the school after the foundation officially got registered, I was extremely pleased with the arrangements and the attention they have given to us and the foundation and the enthusiasm they have shown to be a part of the solution. The school currently has 130 enrolled students from Grades 1 through 6 and even though the medium of instruction is in Telugu, the teachers make an effort in teaching them Basic English. It was explained that since the participation of Siri foundation 6 months ago, the school has had higher enrolment and a lot of interest from the neighboring villages and this is certainly a positive sign.



The electrical work towards providing the school with basic amenities of lighting and ventilation was completed last week of December and Siri foundation donated a bunch of fans to the school. The school is being prepared towards minor renovation in an effort to create the right ambience to the students like fixing the gate, the play ground

and some whitewashing. The foundation also plans to provide some teaching aids to the school so more effective learning techniques can be used throughout.

The local political head has promised to provide us with unconditional support to all the projects that Siri plans on implementing and committed to giving us some space to create a library. Once the plans are finalized, we will mobilize the volunteers to get in touch with the officials to make this happen. This is also expected to be implemented by the end of this year. Siri is also in the process of getting the tables and chairs to the teachers and students and because of the expense, this will be done in batches and the higher classes will get the preference.



As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is very important that you do it”, Siri and its volunteers are committed to meeting all of its objectives set forth this year including an on site visit at least once a year. As we critique and evaluate every objective that is created in regards to adding value to the fundamentals of the foundation and the beliefs of Asha, we will focus on the objectives that will address education and sustainability of the projects chosen. We are grateful to the relentless work done by our on the ground volunteers and are forever indebted to them. As we continue to refine our objectives, the mission of Siri of supporting education at the grassroots level will always be upheld high.