

Bhumi Virtual Site Visit 2023

Date: Thursday, March 16th, 2023

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Background

Bhumi is one of India's largest independent youth volunteer non-profit organizations. Their volunteers work amongst over 18,000 orphaned and underprivileged children every year over 12 cities in India providing children with quality supplementary education. Over 5,000 children from 110 children's homes have benefitted across Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, New Delhi & Tiruchirappalli every year.

Bhumi Ignite bridges the gap in formal education and opportunities by providing 25,000 under-privileged children language and STEM education, life-skills support and scholarships for higher education through volunteering during weekends at orphanages, teaching during the week at low-income private and government schools, and community tutoring every evening at after-school community centers in urban slums.

Nakshatra provides a platform for the children to dream, exhibit their talents, get competitive exposure, discover their potential, dazzle in an atmosphere of healthy competition and enrich themselves with much-needed perspective about their inherent potentials. Additionally, Nakshatra helps to improve the self-confidence of children, contributing to their holistic development through promotion of extra-curricular activities.

Site Visit

In our site visit, we got to see the Bhumi Ignite Program at their Online Learning Center 3 in action. Of Bhumi's 15 centers most have returned to being in person (12/15), but since our site visit was virtual we chose to look at an online center for ease and simplicity. Therefore, the class was structured using Google Meets, and at the starting time of 6:00 PM IST children began to join their class (in which they would be practicing phonetic sounds and basic grammar). In total, 22 children joined the online class.



Similar to the start of the class in the last site visit we attended, the teacher (Julie Sagayapualdoss) asked a light-hearted question to get all of the children engaged. She asked what the students liked to do in their free time, and we were able to hear various responses such as classic activities like football and drawing. When everyone was done sharing, all of the kids clapped for each other, making it very obvious that they were happy to be there. After this introductory game, the class transitioned into one of the main lessons of the day: practicing phonetic sounds. The students practiced this by

singing songs together, with different songs representing different letters. The songs often corresponded with different animals that started with the respective letter, such as “f” for frog or “h” for horse.



After the songs, the class moved into basic grammar lessons, specifically focusing on the usage of the word “have” as opposed to “has”. Ms. Sagayapualdoss did a great job at explaining when to use each word, and the kids seemed to be following along very well. Finally, the children practiced another song to help reiterate these concepts. They seemed very attentive and excited throughout the entire lesson.

Struggles and Further Needs

Compared to the last online class that we saw in our 2021 site visit, this one was a very big improvement. The class seemed to flow a lot smoother, and we felt as though the children were able to learn a lot more because of this. However, a significant setback seemed to be the internet connection/reliability for the call. There were some moments where the students or the teacher would cut out, which meant that instructions had to be

repeated several times. A better internet connection would go a long way in these online classes.