

Site visit report: [Bhumi](#) (Administrative office, Chennai), January 26th 2015, 4:00 PM-5:00 PM
By Ganesh Murthy

Location

Bhumi's administrative office at 13/4, Cenotaph Road, First Lane, Teynampet, Chennai

Hosts

Vaishnavi Srinivasan, Executive Director of Bhumi
Dr. Prahalathan KK, one of the Co-Founders

Summary

I was able to capitalize on an unexpected visit to Chennai by securing a meeting with Bhumi folks at their administrative head office in Chennai. With Asha-MN's new plans to forge a relationship with Bhumi, the goal was to get to know Bhumi and its members in person.

I spent most of the hour talking to Vaishnavi about Bhumi's operation model. Dr. Prahalathan joined us towards the end – taking a break from his work for the meeting. Vaishnavi was extremely enthusiastic about the partnership with Asha-MN.

Bhumi's business model is explained well on their website... but to summarize my understanding from the discussion session: Bhumi recruits volunteers from local colleges – mostly students in their first or second year of college. They undergo training on how best to impart Bhumi's study materials. They also have to commit to about 2 years of relationship with Bhumi. The volunteers then visit local orphanages and conduct a series of courses per a prescribed syllabus (English, Math, Science, etc.). There are different programs for different age groups of children. A typical class size is about 5. The trainers and students work together from start to finish of the course – which can take about 2 years. It's a great 2-way model that benefits both the trainers (building spirit of volunteerism) and students (broadening their horizons).

Bhumi works with various renowned organizations to develop its study materials.

Besides weekly training programs, there are other events (including Nakshatra Talent Search), where the children are provided an opportunity to explore various interests – such as robot making, painting, drama, etc. The children love these interactions because they would otherwise not have such opportunities being within the orphanages.

These facilities are available to those orphanages that have managed to link up with Bhumi. Bhumi is also constantly trying to reach out to more orphanages to expand its reach. The movement is also picking up pace in many big cities now.

Check out the [Bhumi](#) website if you are interested in knowing more.

I would have also to see one of their training sessions live, but since those are all held offsite at different orphanages and only on weekends (I was there only during that week), I was not able to

see one on this visit. This is something we will look forward to do the next time one of our team members is in India.



The head office is a very simple-looking place. It's one office inside this building, which houses 4 other units. Distinctly, no signboards – Vaishnavi said they have not placed signs because that could make the rent go up.



*Inside the office.
There're 7
workstations. All of
the current office-
based employees (7 of
them including
Vaishnavi) work out
of here.*



*Another view of the
office space space –
one of the employees
was entering data
into a system*

--end of report--