

## Manigal – Kottur

Report of 1st Quarter - June 15<sup>th</sup> – Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 2015



Manigal project in Kottur school commenced on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The teachers of the project and volunteers went around the colony and canvassed with the parents to start with. Slowly children started trickling in and attendance started improving. The variety of learning material used and the personal attention they got kindled the interest of the children. One of the teachers lives close to the gypsy colony and her presence has helped greatly in starting this project. She goes around in the colony daily to make sure that children are getting ready for the school. Parents trust her and are willing to send the children along with her.

The challenge was to sustain their initial interest and keep the children engaged, so that they do not drop off again. As the children participated in learning –solving puzzles, arranging alphabets , matching words, pictures and numbers and writing in worksheets an initial assessment of the children was made. Once the children’s levels and abilities became clearer, learning concepts were introduced accordingly. A bridge course approach is being used as it is a long way for children to catch up with their text books. Most of them are at the very beginning level and teachers are learning to cope with children of diverse levels.

In the primary school, the project was initially using an empty classroom till mid June. As the concerned teacher returned, the classroom had to be vacated, the project teachers and gypsy children moved to the corridor. There is shortage of classrooms in the school and the strength of the school is high. An almirah to store teaching and learning material, a blackboard, a pedestal fan and table were arranged at the end of the corridor and a makeshift classroom has been created. About 15 children are showing up in the primary.

The middle and high school has about 13 children. Here too the auditorium in the ground or any empty space is used to interact and teach the middle and high school gypsy children as there are no spare classrooms. The teacher gets the material and worksheets in a bag and takes it back. In middle school too focus is on learning alphabets and words and addition, subtractions and tables. Slowly as they are progressing, learning is being linked to their text books. Teachers interact with project teacher and share with her the assignments to be completed. HMs and teachers of both schools have acknowledged that the project has helped to bring back drop out children and gypsy children are beginning to show interest in learning. However Fridays continue to be a serious problem as gypsy children of the area have the habit of mass bunking on this day. Attempts are being made to schedule some interesting activities on Fridays to change their holiday pattern.

Though a large number of preschool children are present in the colony, it seems an uphill task to enrol and retain LKG children. The project teachers are making an effort to engage LKG children off and on inside the colony and build a rapport with them till they are taken in the preschool.

The final round of vaccination drive for hepatitis B was held in the colony on and the project staff helped in mobilizing parents and children. About 80 got their shots.