

Site Visit Report: Tiyas School

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Background:

The Kankura Masat Social welfare society is a society located in the rural areas of West Bengal. It is a society meant to help the poorer village families in the area. The society runs many different things including the Tiyas school, a coaching center, a new pharmaceutical center, senior citizen programs, and farmer education programs. During the visit we mainly focused on the school and the coaching center. The Tiyas school runs from Preschool to 4th grade. After that, many of the school students attend a different secondary school however, they can still attend coaching classes from grades 5 to 12. The coaching center offers coaching in several subjects and is open to kids who attended other primary schools (not Tiyas School) as well. Overall the coaching center has 14 teachers and the school has 12 teachers. In both the school and center combined, the number of girls significantly outnumber the amount of boys. In fact, 70% of all the students in both the coaching center and the school are girls.

The Tiyas school of the Kankura Masat social welfare society in West Bengal has now been funded by Asha London (since 2016) and Asha Minnesota for the past year. While Asha London funds the teachers salaries for the coaching center catering to the higher grades, Asha MN funded teachers salaries (for 4 teachers) for the primary school and the one-time construction cost of the computer center. Asha Chicago is going to be funding a teachers room, a classroom and the library in 2019.

My Visit:

The first thing I saw upon arriving to the school was the computer room. The computer room has 10 new dell computers and a proper roof. The picture of the newly finished and furnished computer room is shown below. I got to inaugurate the computer room but in reality it was already in use as once can see in the picture below.



I also studied the various pieces of recognition and awards won by the school thus far, evidencing the competence and commitment of the management. One of these is the 3rd placed prize in promoting “Literacy” which was given by the Rotary International District.

Additionally, I talked to several of the students who graduated from High School with good scores. Examples include Swapna Julki, who passed the 12th exams with 73%, and Mamta Gayam, who passed the exams with 80%.

One concern is that even though the school and coaching center have helped the students graduate high school with flying colors, the students don’t have the money to get into a good

college. This is one worry for me as the students can't get to their full potential despite doing well at school unless they get supported further through three years of college (at a tuition cost of Rs. 15k/ year/ person).

Another concern is that their textbooks are old and used heavily and therefore the schoolchildren all need new textbooks.

Finally, we continue to need to support the teaching salaries. The teaching staff at the school is also very enthusiastic. I spoke to two teachers: Udha Dolui, the Mathematics teacher at the coaching center and school, and Sukumar, the English teacher at the coaching center and school. Both of these teachers are very enthusiastic about giving their students the best possible education. Teachers like these only stay at the school if they are able to survive on a decent salary. This cannot be done without the help of Asha.

In summary, the school is very well run and has seemed to make good use of the money that Asha Minnesota has provided for the computer room. Additionally, they have already started constructing more rooms with the money provided by Asha Chicago. The students are taught very well and are eventually able to pass their 12th year exams with flying colors. The pressing needs are for continued support with teachers salaries (for both the school and coaching center between Asha MN and Asha London), textbooks (which Asha MN will provide) and hopefully for the college education of graduating students in the future.

