

Arogyam Site Visits in July 2026

By [Rajaraman Krishnan](#)- volunteer Asha Chennai. On 19-8-26

Asha Chennai runs nutrition program named Arogyam at 4 centres in Thiruvallur. While the government provides free breakfast and lunch at schools, we still find children's growth not what it should be in poorest tribal hamlets. Arogyam program addresses this by providing protein-rich Sundal varieties at these centres every evening. This also helps the children with their homework as they often do not have anyone at home who are educated and can assist them with that.

I visited the three centres that have been running the Arogyam program from January and also the new centre where the program was started in July.

Thirupakkam – June 12th

I visited this mini-school on 12th June. The mini-school in this village is taking place in the front area of a house. The house-owner has so far been giving this space to us for free and have been assisting us in keeping it clean as well. When there no rain, the class takes place outside the house and when there is a chance of rain, they move to the verandah.

When I went, there Menaka showed them a Science experiment about density and then also taught them the water cycle using contents on the computer. I interacted a bit with the children. I tried to make them understand how evaporation occurs at all temperatures and what is special about the boiling point. Menaka seems to be doing Science experiments regularly. Children could recall a few! A couple of the older kids were also coming to the Thomur RTC which is a good 6 Kms away. However, because of infrequent transport, they had stopped attending. They had all brought their school bags for doing the homework.

On that day Menaka had brought in dried peanuts for the snacks. I also served the snack to a few children and then left.

We also support the PUPS Thirupakkam school and have a long history with the village. The mini-school was running in this village during the Covid times as well.



Vasantham Nagar – July 2nd

This is another hamlet we have a long history with. This is an Irular hamlet adjacent to a brick kiln. The children from this hamlet go to PUPS Old Thirupatchur. We have been supporting that school from before Covid as well.

I visited the Vasantham Nagar mini-school on 2nd July. It is being run by Tamilselvi who has been a teacher with us for more than 10 years. Here also the children demonstrated one science experiment to me. They also did one song activity that Tamilselvi had recently learnt in our recent RightStart.

After that I did one activity for them. I showed them how one sheet of normal paper can bear several 100 gms weight when it is folded in a zigzag manner or made into a tube. When I asked the children to try to figure out how to do that, one girl almost got the correct way to fold and bear the weight. Tamilselvi told me how this girl has dropped out of school after the 8th std and Tamilselvi has been trying to make her go back to school.

We then served the children White Channal Dhal sundal. I also tasted it and it was nice. I also met several of the parents there. We had earlier had a plan to build a small room and start a proper library here. But we did not do that as this was not patta



Panpakkam – July 16th

Asha has been supporting PUPS New Panapakkam from after Covid. While we have a long history with the neighbouring richer hamlet of Old Panapakkam, we have a 4 year history with the new Panapakkam. These children live in a hamlet that is about 2.5 Kms from the PUPS New Panapakkam and they are all mostly from Adidraavidar community. We have been sponsoring an auto to transport the children from this hamlet to the New Panapakkam school every day for the last year. We decided to start a new mini-school here.

I visited the place on 16th July along with Gomathi who is going to be the teacher there and Srinivasan, our coordinator. The mini-school has not started there. We just took the opportunity to meet the children and their parents. They thanked us profusely for sponsoring the auto and were very happy that we were coming in to support the nutrition of their children as well. Couple of the mothers were educated and we requested that they should also help out. There was also

a place suitable for running the mini-school at a nearby temple. Some 30 to 40 children are expected to come regularly.



Annanagar – July 30th

I visited Annanagar on 30th July along with a volunteer from Asha Seattle, Anjushree and her 3 children. We once again have a long history with Annanagar. With help from Hyundai Glovis, we built a library building for the school. They have turned this into a Smart classroom and allocate another room for the library. Our librarian Nivetha was managing the library as well as the mini-school.

We got to the school in the evening and interacted first with the children. We asked them to tell a story that their librarian told them recently. Note: we expect librarians to engage the children with story telling at least once a week. The children told a story but it was difficult for us to understand which Nivetha then explained to us. I also told them my usual story about the old man and the 7 donkeys.

On that day Anjushree sponsored an Ice-cream cup for all the children in addition to the usual Sundal. This also meant there were more children on that day (50+) than usual. We distributed the icecreams and the Sundal to the children and then left. The children enjoyed the Icecream!



On the whole the Arogyam program and the mini-schools are serving an important need for both education and nutrition in these 4 hamlets. It was a joy to see the children in each of the hamlets.