

# Field Report

Gramya Sansthan - Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh  
July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025



It was 15 minute past 7am when Surendra ji pulled over under Chaukaghat intersection. I broke off from the political causerie with Sonu, the auto driver who had brought me to our rendezvous point. I quickly paid for my ride and we made our way out of Varanasi city towards Chandauli.

The plan was to visit schools at Amdahan, Jhumaria, Basauli, and Laltapur. We made a pitstop at 8:30am at Chakia on NAugarh road to grab a cup of tea and reached Amdaha-Charanpur school around 9:30am where we were to sojourn with Bindu ji for our onward journey.

## Amdahan-Charanpur

Amdahan (अमदहान-चरनपुर) is amongst the oldest education center, operational since 1996 it has over 90 children and 3 teachers - Karishma, Dilip, and Rama. I had the privilege to visit and learn stories of constant struggles and hard earned success from Rama at this center in 2023 ([https://ashadocserver.s3.amazonaws.com/253\\_Gramya-onsitevisit\\_July2023.pdf](https://ashadocserver.s3.amazonaws.com/253_Gramya-onsitevisit_July2023.pdf)).



This infrastructure at the center has remarkably improved since 2023; an elevated permanent structure concrete pillars supporting a tin-shade roof has replaced the earlier dilapidated and dark rooms under thatched roof (see inset below). This construction was made possible by consistent lobbying at the village panchayat head, Anju Yadav, by Gramya to secure MNREGA funds provisioned by village panchayat.

Whilst this new structure is not ideal for it still lacks the boundary wall instead relying on a makeshift barbed wire fence to keep out the cattle and other livestock admittedly posing some safety concerns for younger children.

Nonetheless, it is still a substantial improvement because it provides an safe open,





New tin-shed structure



Karishma (background) and Dilip (foreground) tutoring



Old abandoned structure



Bindu ji (foreground) standing in the new structure.



well-lit roofed space for children.

At the time of our arrival there were three batches of children sitting on a floor mats under the tin-shed building tutored by Dilip Kumar and Karishma respectively. The first group was learning and solving arithmetic puzzles, while the remaining two group was engaged in language lessons.



Rama on the other hand, had two groups of children organized under the big tree in the compound - The youngest of the lot were being tutored on alphabet and object recognition using flash cards, aided by some creative chalk drawing on blackboard that Rama is an expert on. The older group had self organized and was led by a peer student into a work recognition exercise game. The children in general seemed excited and methodology seemed engaging the students well. I spent some time interacting with the young students, observing their use of flash cards and peer collaboration before taking a brief tour of the surrounding hamlet.



Rama with the children of elementary grades



Students collecting teaching material



## Jhumaria

We arrived at Jhumaria (झुमरिया) by 10:30am when classes were in full swing. This center has two separate classrooms in a brick building with rudimentary setup where children from elementary grades are organized into groups by learning levels. The classrooms were found to be well ventilated, clean and well organized.



Jhumaria Education Center

The first classroom was engaged in a grammar lesson, where students were learning about Nouns in hindi language. Accompanied by Bindu ji and Surendra ji, I spent some time with the children to experience the learning methodology.. In general the classroom atmosphere was positive, and engaging, the methodology of using mixing English and Hindi grammar constructs was somewhat confusing and I offered feedback to limit arbitrary cross pollinating between the languages.

The second class of mixed aged students were organized into groups where the first group was being tutored in sciences while the other was engaged in a language self study.



Hindi Grammar class



Hindi grammar class



Cerimonial and evidentiary Selfie



## Basauli

Basauli (बसौली) is a relatively remote center which was somewhat difficult to reach because of the overflowing canal that our ride could not negotiate safely. After taking a small hike over the bend in the canal we arrived at the Basauli center by 11:30am. Basauli center beautifully is surrounded by groves of Sagwan and Mahua dotting the red clay earth. This center with its thatched roof and mud thatched floors is reminiscent of the old Amdahan (अमदहान) center. This center has over 40 children tutored by Jayprakash who is not only a seasoned teacher associated with Gramya since 2002 but is also sharp of memory and was able to recall our meeting from 2023.



Two classes were underway, the language class was tutored by Jayprakash in the muggy room where the students of two learning levels were engaged in a language exercise. I spent some time inside the classroom solving the language problems that required both reading as well as as comprehension skills, and found most students engaged and proficient in the language skills.

The second class was in the open courtyard under the thatched roof working with the flash cards. Since this center only has a single teacher, Jayprakash divided his time between the two classes which naturally means that at least one group has to engaged in self-study/group exercises. I have found children in general to be positively and meaningfully engaged in self study.



Jayprakash (foreground) at Basauli center

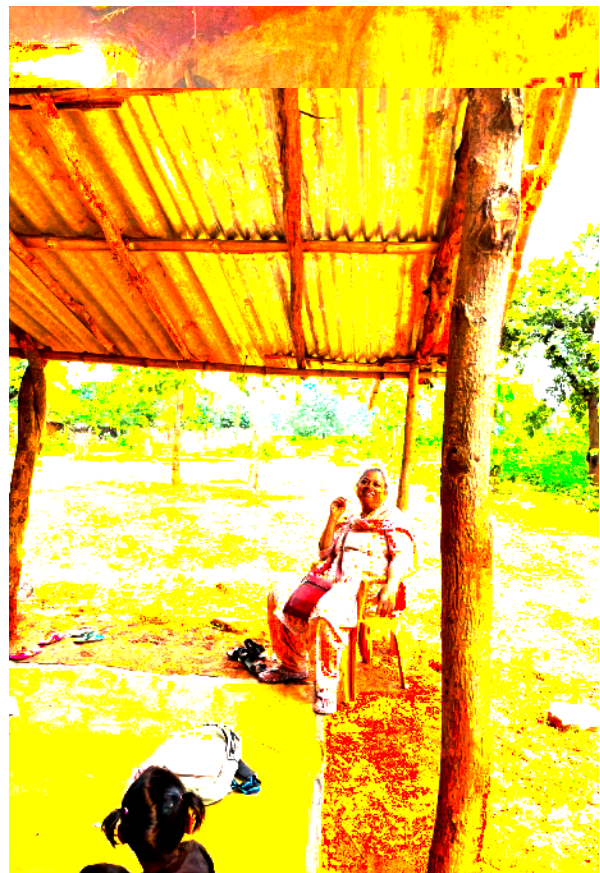


Classroom at Basauli center





Self Learning using Flash Cards



Bindu ji at Basauli center, sitting next to the children working with flash cards

## Laltapur

We arrived at Laltapur (लालतापुर) center, which is also the office and primary center of Gramya around 2:30pm. At the insistence of Bindu ji we took a detour from Basauli to meet with the the Additional SP of the police in Chandauli. Gramya conducts a vocational training program adolescent girls that is supported by the local police department and an ad-hoc meeting was arranged to request for pending funds for the recently culminated program as well as organizing an event for the recently graduated cohorts.

Back at Laltapur, I spent roughly an hour meeting the students and teachers. We started with elementary grade students from 1st grade watching and discussing an animations of short stories. It was wonderful to observe the children watching the

projected animation in rapt attention addressing the class through a microphone to answer the questions. The projector and animations are a recent and welcome additions into the inventory of teaching aid at Laltapur school. We subsequently spent some time with a middle school math, hindi and english language classes respectively. I was encouraged by the open library - an open shelf with picture and story books besides workbooks that children are encouraged to pick and return after reading - in addition to the library room - this was an intervention that I had suggested in 2023 to encourage reading and has been successfully adopted since then. We discussed making old edition of newspapers available to students to further encourage reading while aiding in building awareness of current local, national and world affairs.

I was fascinated by teaching methodology employed by some teachers, especially in mathematics where use of number cards hooked on a string or wire spanning the room was used to first order numbers and subsequently to add and subtract numbers in a fun engaging game. This method was introduced by a training program conducted by Eklavya foundation and has done wonders in improving





learning as well as engagement. It was obvious that a further, immersive training session would be highly beneficial for the teachers as well as students.

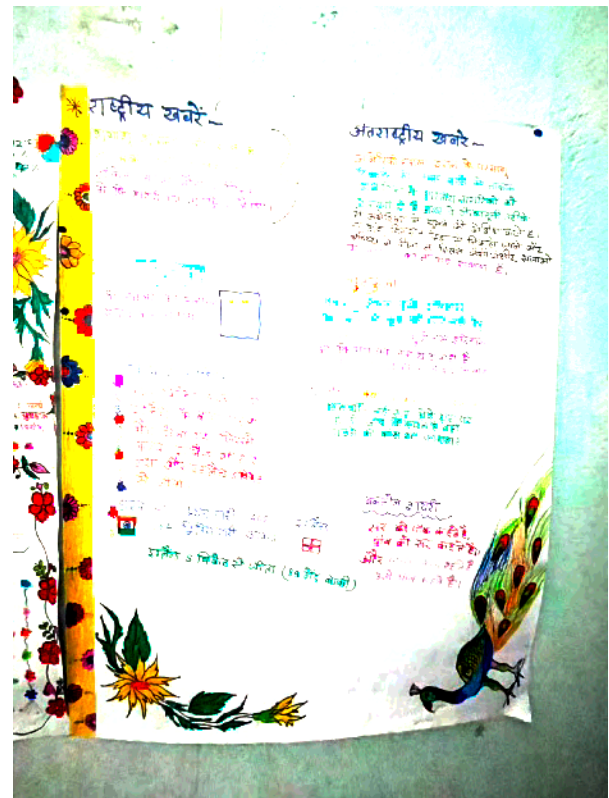
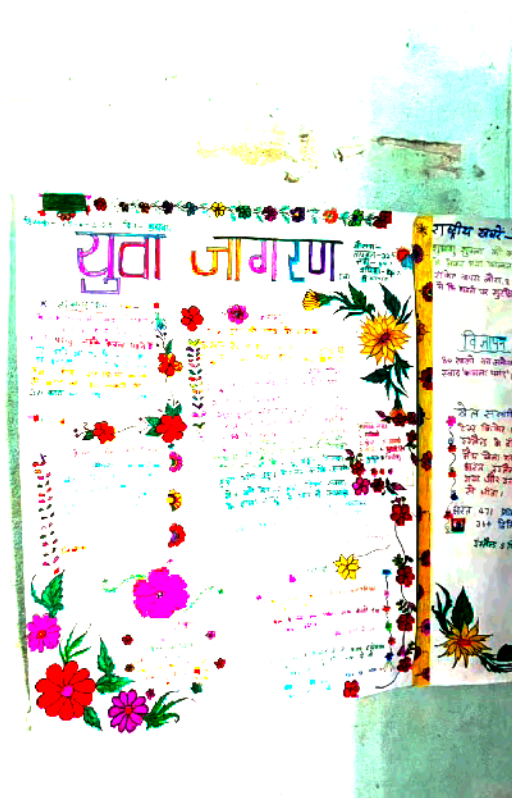


Short story animations and discussion



Number counting, and additions through use of fish cards on string

Children of Laltaput school produces Yuva Jagaran (see inset below) - a fortnightly news periodical that is prominently displayed in the school library.





The school was dismissed soon, and after a brief break we assembled in the meeting room for a conversation over tea with the teachers and Gramya leadership - Bindu ji and Surendra ji. Neetu ji was traveling for work and unfortunately wasn't able to meet at this occasion. The conversation with the teachers was fruitful and positive. We were also joined briefly by the teaching and community outreach volunteers besides the full time teachers.



Laltapur School

Unfortunately, perennial delay in salaries, in some cases delay exceeding three months, dominated the conversation. It is disheartening that the hardworking teachers like Rama, Jayprakash, and others who in substantial ways are more than mere teachers having invested decades negotiating challenging working conditions to have to petition for their salaries. Meager as they are, in most cases form the only means of subsistence for families and the delay in funding from Asha for Education disproportionately hurts the morale as well as financial condition of the teachers.

The conversation also resulted in a recommendation to explore ways to conduct periodic training for teachers. The last training session with Eklavya foundation was quite successful and there is a lot of desire for an ongoing training program.

We dismissed our meeting after tea at 4:30pm. I ended by site visit at 4:45pm and bit goodbye to Bindu ji and Laltapur staff for my ride back to Varanasi City with Surendra ji at the wheel.

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