

Visit to JSVN Schools on November 18th 2015

Visiting Team:

Hiren Sarma	ADI, Houston, USA
Biswadip Barooah	ADI Guwahati
Dr. T.C.Sarma	Coordinator, JSVN Schools, SSA, Baisistha

Date of visit: November 18 '2015

Minutes recorded by Hiren Sarma and reviewed by Biswadip Barooah and Dr. T.C. Sarma.

Current Strength of students in different Schools:

Name of School	Preprimary	Class -1	Class-2	Class-3	Class-4	Class-5	Class-6	Class-7	Class-8
JSVN, Basistha	18	19	10	15	21	15	10	12	8
JSVN,Robingaon	16	5	7	5	5	5			
JSVN, Pachim Killing	13	5	2	3	4	3			
JSVN,Dharbam	12	5	6	9	6	7			

Total Strength is 246.

See reference table below showing student enrolment in April'2015.

Major Findings:

It is important to emphasize that the school population is mostly from tribal areas in very much under developed and remote regions and most of the parents are uneducated and daily wage earners, living below poverty line.

1.0 lack of provision of basic amenities, e.g., uniforms, play items (indoor/outdoor), mid-day meals are the primary reasons for reduction in enrolment, which are provided by the Government schools. It is expected that the provision of these amenities will bring back some students, if not all and also attract more students for fresh enrolment.

2.0 The most vulnerable schools are the smaller ones in the remote areas. Unfortunately, their options are also limited. For example, the students at Pachim Killing school are stuck there, due to hilly terrain, difficult to commute during rainy season.. The area is quite difficult to approach and there is no way the small kids can walk around to the Government school located on the other side of the hill.

3.0 Although, the student reduction is largest at Dharbam, the head teacher, Ms. Bharali is confident that with the provision of some amenities, mentioned above, she would be able to bring back some students.

4.0 Teachers' training is continuing at the basic minimum. The teaching seems to be adequate, although there is room for improvement, particularly in the smaller schools. A few outstanding ex-students did well in the high schools and colleges. Some students participated in national meets at Delhi (Yoga, Dance). Emphasis on improvement in hand writing is essential in all schools.

5.0 Number of teachers has been reduced according to the reduction in enrolment.

5.0 At the meeting with Shri Hem Bhai and Swamiji, following the visits, it was unanimously agreed that;

1) Immediate measures will be taken up locally to initiate work on providing some of the amenities mentioned above (also see details below), and

2) The visiting team (obtained agreement with MND Bordoloi who could not join the team due to his ill health) and SSA Management would like to request ASHA to continue functioning of the school and continue observing the enrolment trend over next two years and reassess the situation on year to year basis.

JSVN, Santiban, Basistha school:

The school is located at Basistha hillside. The locality is inhabited by mostly tribal people. The people are poor and daily wage earner. Other schools are at a minimum distance of 2 KM. With the running of this school people are finding easy to send their wards to this school. By far, this is the healthiest school in terms of increasing enrolment, although they have their own needs for improved infrastructure.

Teachers:

Ms Jeuti Sarma	16 Years Experience
Babina Kumari	5
Rina Barman	7
Mitali Bhuyan	2
Bipul Roy	1

Spoke to the teachers and some students. It was a sports day in the school. The random checks of the record books look satisfactory. Generally, this school is doing well. The guardians provide the school uniforms. Teachers informed that free supply of books, uniforms & school bags, free meals will motivate the students further.

Improvement Required: School building, including walls need urgent repair. Toilets facilities are there, but need some plumbing repair. The students need to go quite far to the Ashram toilets.

ROBIN GAON SCHOOL:

The school is located at remote place in a locality of tribal people. They are poor and daily wage earners. The school is bringing awareness among the villagers about the necessity of education. Most villagers are illiterate, earlier they preferred to engage the wards in day to day jobs only. This is still an issue. The visiting team spoke to the father of two children. After he leaves for his job, the kids go around the villages and avoid the school and the teachers by all means. The team spoke to the kids and explained to them why they should return to the school.

Teachers:

Mr. Purnanda Deka	23 Years Experience
Ms. Babita Baishya	7

Looking at their test results, the students' performance seems satisfactory, although improvement is necessary in some areas. Teachers are taking due care in teaching the subjects. The school is working hard to create a positive environment in the nearby villages. The lack of any recreational materials (outdoor/indoor) makes the school environment monotonous for the kids.

Some parents, who can afford (very few) to pay school fees have moved their wards to a nearby private school.

Improvement Required: CI sheets on the roof are corroded/damaged and need immediate repair/painting. A number of doors need to be replaced. The building needs painting. As with the other schools, free supply of text books, uniforms/bags, mid-day meal need to be seriously considered.

PACHIM KILLING SCHOOL:

The school is located at a remote place. Communication is also difficult. The school is surrounded by the villages of tribal people. They are very poor and daily wage earners. The nearest school is located at other side of the hill. The communication between two sides of the hill is very difficult. This school is giving a very good environment among villagers and bringing awareness for education.

Teachers:

Mr. Dharma Rahang	15 Years experience
Ms. Pratima Lahkar	15

Students' performance was generally satisfactory. Teachers are taking due care in teaching the subjects. School is creating a positive environment among villagers. Again, lack of any recreational materials makes it difficult for the teachers to motivate students.

Improvement Required: The CI sheets on the building roof are damaged by hail storm. These are to be replaced and old ones are to be painted; Doors also need repairing. The building also needs painting.

Indian Oil Corporation funded to drill a water well and storage facilities, built a toilet. Unfortunately, due to presence of rocks, water flow is minimal and the school cannot meet their needs. There is a proposal for boring a new well down below, subject to availability of funds.

Desk- Bench are to be provided for Lower primary classes. Teachers requested for text books, uniform- bags and mid-day meal.

DHARBAM SCHOOL:

Villagers of this locality are mostly tribal. They are daily wage earners. The villagers nearby found to be very enthusiastic to have this school near their village. There is very positive environment in the society centring the school. Students, generally are taking interest in their studies.

Teachers:

Ms. Sachi Prava Bharali	12 Years experience
Lalita Rahang	2

Teachers take care of the students and try to communicate with the guardians so that they can motivate and guide their wards. A very good relation exists between the school and the guardians.

There is only one class room where students are accommodated in congested way. Extension of one class room was considered urgent last year. However, due to shrinking enrolment this can be put on hold until further assessment. One teacher's room with a desk and a pair of chairs is also essential. There is no lavatory in the school. Need of a lavatory is a basic essential.

The only approach to the school is a weak and narrow bamboo over a water stream. A permanent culvert is essential over this stream for children's safety.

Conclusions:

- 1.0 Hiren Sarma committed to arrange/provide fund for purchasing approx. 120 pairs of uniforms for the 3 schools in Pachim Killing, Dharbam and Robingaon. Dr.T.C Sarma will arrange to source the tailor to go to the villages and take measurements, and together with Biswadip Barooah will purchase the cloth in Guwahati. It is planned to make the uniforms available by end December'2015. SSA will provide transportation to the schools, as needed
- 2.0 Dr. T.C.Sarma will have further discussion with Mr.Hem Bhai for funding the work agreed in the meeting with Hiren Sarma and Biswadip Barooah on November 18th. The following items were generally agreed:
 - 2.1 Play materials (indoor/outdoor) for the schools,
 - 2.2 Table/Chairs and Desk/Benches as required,
 - 2.3 Some repair/maintenance work as required in the schools.

The estimates for the above (item wise) will be made by Dr. Sarma and agreed with Biswadip Barooah before presenting to Mr.Hem Bhai.

- 3.0 The possibility of providing mid day meals at the schools will be explored further.
- 4.0 Hiren Sarma will try to create a support pool from friends and relatives via e-mails.

Reference current strength of student enrolment above, the following table is presented for a comparison (from April'2014 report).

Strength of students in different Schools (April'2014):

Name of School	Preprimary	Class -1	Class-2	Class-3	Class-4	Class-5	Class-6	Class-7	Class-8
JSVN, Basistha	20	9	17	13	11	5	8	12	14
JSVN, Robingaon	20	15	8	10	6				
JSVN, Pac him Killing	14	11	8	7	6	7			
JSVN,Dharbam	26	26	20	16	14	10			

Total Strength is 339.

November 22'2015