

I am Rajaraman Krishnan, a volunteer of Asha Chennai. I had made a visit to three schools that are planned to be supported as part of the Poorna Vidhya project for 2016 along with the project steward Mrs. Kasturi Eswaran. The visit was done in mid-June 2016.

Kasturi and I visited the corporation schools at Odaikuppam, Sastrinagar and N.S. Gade and that are being supported by Poorna Vidhya.

Here are the observations from the schools.

Odaikuppam School

Class	Strength
LKG	24
1 st Std	17
2 nd Std	26
3 rd Std	17
4 th Std	19
5 th Std	32

The total number of children (actual) is 121. They have improved a little bit in the enrollment this year. Further the introduction of LKG in the school this year is expected to boost the enrollment in the coming years. The children who join in LKG will likely continue here for the regular schooling as well.

The school continues to have HM+5 teachers. We have been providing the school with a computer teacher Yamuna. The very old computers that the school had have mostly stopped working. There is one desktop computer with the school which is connected to a projector which are given by the Govt. Further Asha teacher has a laptop. We had towards the end of last year provided the school with a laptop. Our computer teacher preferred a desktop computer.

I had taken that with me. I also helped them set that up when I went there. They needed some more accessories like a pen drive for copying data and a UPS for the desktop computer. These were also provided within a week after this visit.

Shastrinagar School

Class	Strength
LKG + UKG	22
1 st Std	12
2 nd Std	11
3 rd Std	18
4 th Std	9

5 th Std	10
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The number of children in standards 1 to 5 has remained about the same from last year. However the Kindergarden strength in LKG and UKG now is only about the same as the strength last year in LKG. One problem they are noticing is that since the government isn't as particular about the lower limit for the age of the kids joining, the parent put the children first here and when they come to the required age, they move them to the private schools! So some of the hopes that Kindergarden would help improve enrollment may be misplaced in this school as well as other government schools.

Currently Asha is also providing one teacher Philomina to the school. One of the old Asha teachers, Mekala who was the craft teacher there (appointed by Shastrinagar Residents association and not Asha) has now got the job as a Kindergarden teacher. The computers here are continuing to be well used. Mekala continues to help with that as well in addition to her new role in the KG section. They have also got a couple of good used computers donated to them. They will have a total of 4 computers in good condition at the school in addition to the Asha laptop with our teacher Philomena.

NS Garden School

Class	Strength
LKG + UKG	64
1 st Std	21
2 nd Std	30
3 rd Std	18
4 th Std	17
5 th Std	15
6 TH Std	16
7 th Std	15
8 th Std	19

This school has approached Asha for providing them a computer teacher. The ex-headmistress and the Thiruvanmiyur Kuppam school (which we used to support earlier), one Dakshayani is now working here. She is a motivated teacher and has even been attending our RightStart teacher training program.

The school has adequate number of teachers but no one who can teacher with computers. They claimed to also have adequate computers. But upon closer inspection most of them do not work and are too old to be even repaired. They were expecting 3 more computers from SSA. But in the months since these have still not materialized.

The school has arrested the fall in the numbers. The facilities are quite good. The interesting this we noted is that the school has been provided with a Smart Class. One room has been made into a smart class with good furniture, new computer and projector. But the contents provided on this is horrible. Some company has just adapted the government textbook into some slides and these are the only presentations available. And some poor quality questions are provided for interactions with the students. The teachers wanted better contents! Asha can certainly help with that.

Conclusion

Our support at Shastrinagar is very much appreciated and we should be supporting such motivated teachers. Given the number of students and teachers at the other two schools, I think just providing one common computer teacher to both the schools will be sufficient. When we provide a computer teacher for all days like we have been doing at Odaikuppam, they end up taking care of regular classes when the government teachers are absent or on other duty. This is not really required since there are enough teachers at both the other schools. Given this sharing a computer teacher between the two schools and having them focus on just teaching with the computers may be a better approach.