

Visit to Deenabandhu on August 30th, 2023

By Melli Annamalai, Asha Boston

I visited Deenabandhu on the day of the Science Fair. Teaching Science through experiential means has been a focus of Deenabandhu for many years now. Both at the Deenabandhu Children's home and Deenabandhu School (attended by children from the Deenabandhu Children's home and nearby villages) there is a heavy emphasis on teaching Science by experiencing it. Over the last two decades they have built up a very impressive Teacher Resource Center that makes 'Teaching Learning Material' (TLMs) from local materials. Wherever possible the experiments are linked to local themes.

Consequently children are not afraid of Science and the occasion of the Science fair generates a lot of excitement (like for their annual day function). Children prepare for a month and are involved in every stage of planning and execution. The event has also gained a lot of traction in Chamarajanagara town and surrounding areas. Invitations are sent out to all schools in the area to visit, and teachers bring them (for children that come from schools far away lunch is provided). This year the attendance exceeded expectations (after a hiatus during Covid and a comparatively low key event last year). Over 2500 students from 56 schools visited and participated. The event was a big success. Also this year the Chamarajanagara DDPI (who heads all the government education institutions in the district) came to inaugurate the event, which again highlights how Deenabandhu is working with the system.

This year the rooms at the Deenabandhu School had been organized by theme – heat, light, magnetism, maths for fun, statistics, and much more. A new section this time was on climate change. These rooms are at the Deenabandhu School. In the courtyard of the school was an hourly presentation on chemical experiments, where children were excited to see the formation of various gases and liquids. In addition, visitors visit the Science Park which has life size models of several experiments (for example the coupled pendulum is a swing set for the children), and the Science Gallery where a top quality Science museum has been set up (as explained in [last year's report](#)).

We started the day with a special and very tasty breakfast. Then there was the inauguration where I participated by kick-starting the festivities with an experiment (hand sanitizer has alcohol, when you put a little bit of alcohol in a plastic bottle and warm it the alcohol becomes gas and expands quickly and the plastic bottle gets momentum to travel a short distance in the air). These kinds of experiments are fun for the children as they see something exciting visually that they relate to a scientific principle.

Everywhere there were throngs of excited children. Many carried notebooks and took notes, I think because the teachers had asked them to. For the children it was a chance to see lots of new things, and this is a lot more educational (in terms of teaching Science) than going to a local fair. The teachers seemed to enjoy themselves too, I chatted with one of the visiting teachers briefly and she was a Kannada teacher but was still visiting with the students because she enjoyed learning about Science. There is such an interest in the community if there are resources available.

It was great to see the interesting in learning Science by doing alive and well at Deenabandhu and the surrounding schools. Several children had come from the government schools under 'Project Shaale,' and those teachers were glad to be there as well.







Inauguration with the DDPI and other dignitaries



My favorite experiment: Role a dice and drop a bean in jars labeled 1-6, at the end of the day all jars have an equal number of beans. Some 2500 kids were visiting from 56 schools (from surrounding villages) and at the end of the day all jars had an equal number of beans.