

## **Report of visits to schools in Thiruvallur District on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

My name is M. Venkataraman. I retired last year as COO of CAMS Pvt Ltd, a company which provides Registrar and Transfer agency services to Mutual Funds. Through a local news paper, I learnt about Asha. I reached out to Mr. Rajaraman to explore opportunities to assist Asha, on a part time basis as a volunteer and he readily agreed. On 19<sup>th</sup> July Mr Rajaraman visited few schools supported by Asha and I accompanied him. This report covers our visit. We reached the first school at 2.00 PM

### 1. Panchayat union Primary School (PUPS) in New Thirupachur

This school has 70 students from class 1 to class 5 and has 3 full time teachers, including the head Mistress. This school caters to children of economically weaker families and hence teachers need to put in lot of efforts to retain and motivate the students as the parents are unable to devote time to monitor the progress of their children. The regular teachers appeared to be strict with the students.

Ms Seetha, computer teacher from Asha, visits this school one day a week and she was present on 19<sup>th</sup> July. When we visited the school, she was teaching students of 3<sup>rd</sup> standard. The children actively participated in this class. The novelty of computer based content was very interesting to the students. This school has two PCs.

Students of classes 1, 2 are first taught basics of computer, rhymes etc

Students of 3<sup>rd</sup> standard are taught to draw, paint and are taught English, maths using games

Students of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> classes are taught use of Open office, English, maths

Head mistress of this school has been requesting Asha to provide one full time teacher



## 2. PUPS in Old Thirupachur

This school has 49 students (classes 1 to 5) and 2 regular teachers, including one head mistress. It has 2 class rooms. As one class room was being renovated all students were housed in one class room when we visited. Ms Rajkumari, Computer teacher from Asha, was engaging all students using passive computer based activities. With her intervention she made all students to participate.

We interacted with the students and asked them few simple questions in English and maths. They did well in English but most of them were found to be weak in basic maths. This feedback was given to the regular teacher. One of the students was found to be very good at Maths. When we pointed this out, the teacher said his father owns a shop and since the boy is used to help in the shop he has become proficient in maths as he was required to calculate correct amount of money to be collected from customers. Looks like family business helps in education also.



## 3. PUPS in Nemiliaharam

This school has 30 students (classes 1 to 5) and 2 regular teachers, including the head mistress. It has one full time Asha teacher and one computer teacher who visits once a week. We interacted with the students and found them to be good both in English and maths. We voiced our concern about low student strength. The head mistress said they will get about 10 children soon whose parents work in brick kilns nearby. They work in this area for 6 months in a year and they go back to their native places for the rest of the year. Their children study in this

school for 6 months and go to a school in their native place for the rest of the year. The head mistress said the impact of computer based teaching by Asha is being recognised by local population and she is hopeful that few students who currently go to private school may come back to this school



#### 4. PUPS in Kuppammal Chatheram

We reached this school just after working hours and hence we could not interact with the students. We met the head mistress and the Asha teacher assigned to this school. This school has 62 students and 3 regular teachers, including the head mistress. Computer teacher from Asha visits this school once a week. Asha has been associated with this school from 2004. Reduction in strength of students in recent years is a cause for concern.



#### General observations relating to all four schools

- Regular teachers in these schools welcome support from Asha whole heartedly.
- They openly admit that the school benefits from contributions of Asha teachers
- The teachers are keen to enrol maximum students in their respective schools
- They are knowledgeable about the area serviced by their school and their competition
- Since activity based learning is used in classes 1, 2 teachers are required to interact with students one on one.
- Students boldly talk to visitors and enthusiastically interact. Competition to make use of computers is very evident
- In addition to PCs available at the schools, children are allowed to use the lap tops of Asha teachers also.