

Report on Sangamam Library at Annanagar

The library at Annanagar was inaugurated on 13th October 2018. The library building and the play area were completed and ready for use. We had appointed a girl from Annanagar, Thilothama as the librarian. The library started functioning the very next working day of 15th October.

Visits to the Library

Volunteers and Project Coordinator of Asha Chennai have been visiting the library almost a couple of times every week since then. Here are some photos from these visits.





Initially we were quite concerned how the library can be managed with so many boisterous children. But they have also settled down and their fascination with the slide and the jungle gym have subsided a bit. Thilothama and her sister Nirosha are able to manage the children inside the library.

Our trips have been as much for the purpose of understanding how things would work as to teach Thilolama what to do at the library.

Library Schedule and Functioning

The library is open from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm every day Monday to Saturday. About 20 children are inside the library at any time. A total of 30 children would have been in the library on any day. There would be another 10 to 15 more playing outside. These activities are being done every day.

1. Children playing in the play area.
2. Children taking skipping rope, balls, ring etc. outside and playing with those. She usually allows them to take these out only till about 6:00 pm.
3. Children playing educational games on the laptops. One laptop has been reserved for girls and one for boys.
4. Children are reading books with the help from the librarian. Their reading skills are quite poor. Thilothama asks one of the children (who can read a little better) to read out the story to all the children.
5. Thilothama also tells at least a couple of stories every day. She usually asks questions about the story to make sure children understood them.
6. Thilothama uses the projector and laptop to show them a story from the collection given by Asha. These are usually in English. Thilothama translates and explains the story in Tamil.

The library is being managed by Thilothama and her sister Nirosha.

Plans for the Future

We plan to start the following at the library over the course of the next couple of months.

1. Provide more stories and videos on the laptop so that the story reading can be continued by Thilothama.
2. Provide jigsaw and other types of puzzles for children to play at the library.
3. Start a craft or practical science class (i.e. science experiment demonstrations) once a week. We have to equip Thilothama to be able to do this.
4. Bring in external people (volunteers from Chennai and Asha teachers from nearby) to do story telling sessions in English.
5. Allow / encourage children to take books home to read. Reward children with one book every time they complete 5 books.

In the longer term we are also looking to do the following things,

1. Level the ground in front of the library, put up nets for playing either volleyball or shuttle-cock in the evenings. Make the resources for this available at the library.
2. Gradually introduce homework in the school and assist with that in the evening at the library.
3. If we find appropriate resources offer classes in some skills like music or karate or silambam or ...