

Visit by ArunKumar, Vigneshwaran, Anand, graduates and young activists from Madurai Seed Narpanigal in June 2019

Site visit Dates: June 28-30, 2019

Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/HM2WCP5o1mkd8dSz5>

For those at the very bottom to come up

Dedicated, selfless, open-hearted, idealistic people elevate our confidence and give us positivity. We had such an opportunity recently on 28,29,30 June 2019. Myself (ArunKumar), Vigneshwaran, Anand went to Kalpakkam to take part in Reward Trust's event. Our objectives were to visit some government schools where Reward Trust's teachers are working, to attend Reward teachers' annual project work submission program, and to photo and video document the event.

Beyond our objectives we had great occasions to learn and converse about education and children.

Conversations with Mr. Sridhar & Mrs. Kalavadhi widened many perspectives on education and social service.

Even during family conversations and official meetings, the couple's talks were more about promoting schools, education policies and students.

Their new house close to a school looks more exactly as an educational campus with set-ups for meeting room, classroom, library and science activity floor and also for students to stay and study.

The work they do in person and through the Reward Trust is essential and beyond possible.

Students educated in outermost remote village schools have their career as doctors, researchers, engineers, teachers and scientific technicians with the support of Reward.

Reward Trust

“Get up and come up, as you are born little, it doesn’t mean you have to dream little and can travel only little distance”. “Reward Trust opens doors with a big hope for a long journey for children and youth in the villages.

When government is mute on its responsibilities, children should not be scapegoated in the middle. Hence Reward foundation employs temporary teachers in government schools with the permission of the District Education office and concerned headmasters of the schools.

As Mr. & Mrs. Sridhar works at IGCAR, Kalpakkam, the center’s social welfare, educational, scholarship schemes are diverted to the needy schools and children by them. They have upgraded many schools and many villages.

They want the students to get interested in science and math. The talented children should not be missed, and lost amidst the disadvantages in their locale. The couple dream about first generation and rural students entering into the top most educational institutions, universities and research labs. And, there are already a lot of success stories.

The couple started finding the needs of rural schools, began teaching Math and Science lessons individually and also, they involved their family members into it. Reward foundation continues its tasks by teaching and mentoring the best students

at their home, upgrading quality of schools and buildings with the help of government and private bodies, and now addressing teacher shortages. Students benefit from teachers hired by Reward; on the other hand, this program provides employment to young people from villages who have completed teacher training. Additionally, they get skill development trainings. More female teachers and married people are working as Reward teachers.

School Visits:

Reward works in villages around Kalpakkam. We visited few classrooms in five schools. Parents send children to schools with big dreams and children come every day to school with big hopes. They look only for a slightest change in life through education. Seeing the school campus as a colossal body of hope and dreams is incredible.

A Reward teacher taught the class, and Mr. Sridhar taught for a while. The students participated in the class with much involvement.

While looking around, most of the schools got compound walls, auditorium, classroom buildings, furniture, and sports equipment through the donation of individuals, charities and village people. And it was certainly all due to the efforts of headmasters of the respective school.

Compared to the schools we have seen in the outskirts of Madurai, those schools have trees, building facilities and vast premises. Many schools started English medium classes. Also, there was a significant number of students.

There are many schools in every village of Kancheepuram, but as far as we observed there are more shortages of teachers in the schools.

During the car trips when visiting the schools, Sridhar shared about alumni and teachers of Reward, showed us the schools Reward works at, the routes, some

of the major issues of the villages. He recalled his memories that even when there was no proper road condition; he used to come by bicycle to teach children.

Teachers Meet

Teachers were divided into 10 teams and researched on 10 education-centric topics. Some of the topics are evaluation of students and teachers, school infrastructure, school education in other countries, extracurricular activities, etc. With the help of Internet and books, they have collected a lot of data and information.

In addition to that, by discussion with parents and children, the teachers provided suggestion for the development of schools, teachers, and students by analyzing problems and solutions according to local situation.

But, in our country the education is state centered. The curriculum and education policies are being imposed from above. We don't believe a revolution will come one day, and everything will be changed in one day. But certainly, these field reviews give awareness to teachers about what is happening around them, and also teach them political, social justice and scientific perspectives while addressing a problem.

Reward foundation makes teachers to think what changes they can make as individuals in the classroom, and what benefits they can provide to the schools they work. Kindling this thinking process is the success the meeting.

In the program, we were very glad to meet well-known people who are working in the fields of school education, public schools, education policy, science

education in the state level campaigns. Their feedback at the end of every presentations added more clarity to the topic.

The expenses for this field study and meeting were shared by the teachers which is a testament to their passion in teaching.

Some of the topics for annual project in the recent year are birds, and book reviews.

Within the limitations of their funding, Reward teachers are paid very minimum wages compared to government school teachers, but their involvement in teaching and their efforts to improve themselves are highly commendable.

Conclusion:

Why do not the Government schemes and higher education opportunities reach students of small village schools? Why even their dreams are too simple? Poverty, family environment, lack of guidance and awareness are the major reasons.

Whom to blame? Government, teachers, parents, politicians, education policies, media and there are many flaws in everybody, everywhere. But what are we going to do for our children in the meantime between of finding and correcting the flaws? This is where the work of Reward Trust is to be highlighted.

Rather than influencing negative, agitated, anti-governmental attitude Reward foundation frames and works on idealistic, positive, profound, peaceful and collaborative activities.

Reward sets an example for the phrase “We can do it; Action is our only path and progress is our only goal”

In this desperate period of New National Education Policy, English medium schools, loots of private educational institutions, closure of government schools, we

found ourselves motivated on seeing the service of Sridhar and Kalavathi and the teachers of Reward.

It is sure, there will be a lot of students coming out of these small remote villages, they will bring pride to themselves and their villages. Behind those success stories, there will be the hard work of Reward Foundation.

For the guidance to visit Reward's works, I thank Melli Akka, ASHA for Education, Reward Foundation and Madurai Seed friends and supporters.