

GSK Site Visit Report
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<i>Project name</i>		Uday pathshala	
		Shikshan mein Gunvat-ta (Quality in Education)	
<i>Organization</i>		Gramin Shiksha Kendra	
<i>Location</i>		Jaganpura and Bodal Village Sawai Madhavpur, Rajasthan	
<i>Focus Area</i>		Providing quality education to rural children through alternative education model	
<i>Project Contact</i>		Mr. Maneesh Pandey	
<i>Lead</i>	Murali Narasimhan	<i>Leads' email id</i>	"Murali Narasimhan" <murali.narasimhan@gmail.com>,
<i>Nature of Project</i>	An alternative model to provide quality education to rural children.		
<i>Visit Objective</i>	Follow-up monitoring visit		
<i>Visit Date</i>	23 rd & 24 th Feb. 2009	<i>Visited By</i>	Zankhana

Transportation

On 22nd Feb, left by 6 p.m. August Kranti Express Train from Borivali station- reached Sawai Madhopur on 23rd at 6.30 a.m.- Jaganpura site visit by a hired vehicle - on 24th, Bodal site visit by a hired vehicle - took 2.35 p.m. Ranthambhore Express - reached Jaipur at 5.30 p.m.

On 25th, auto to Prayas office - site visit till 5.30 p.m. by the project vehicle - meeting up with the director of IICD for RMKM at Jhalna instituted area - auto to Arya-Niwas.

On 26th, morning auto to Prayas project site Raja Park - visit to H.O. - auto to Arya Niwas.

On 27th, took 6.20 a.m. Blue line bus - reached Ajmer at 10 a.m. - reached RMKM campus at 11a.m. by the project vehicle - back to Ajmer by RMKM vehicle at 3.30 p.m.- took Blue line bus - reached Jaipur at 7.30 p.m. - took auto to airport - took 9.20 p.m. flight - reached Bombay airport at 11 p.m. - auto to home

Summary of Activities:

a. Capital-intensive activities (construction/infrastructure)

b. Periodic Activities (Quarterly, Monthly meetings etc) GSK organizes an annual celebration called " kilol" in 1st week of February were the project children, the parents and all the stake holders participate actively.

c. Daily activities (School/center activities) both school works from 8 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. with 1 hour lunch break at 11.30 a.m.

GSK schools do not have fixed timetable. It has multi- level, multi- grade teaching learning sessions. So each day goes according to the planning made on previous day. Each day after school hour the teacher sit together from 2.30 p.m to 5.30p.m for evaluation and next day planning - lesson exercise and worksheets. After 5.30 pm they make rounds of the villages & interact with the villagers till 6.30 pm.

This time Maneesh family hosted my lodging- boarding so it gave me enough opportunity to understand all the difficulties & intricacies GSK being an alternative unique model has gone through, the sat back and the efforts Maneesh had to put for GSK to survive. The FCRA process for GSK took nine months after the start of the academic year and there was no incoming of funds to run the project. The teachers tried hard to help each other from their own savings but for them it was very difficult to survive without salaries. As a result, with heavy feelings 5 out of well trained 10 teachers left GSK one by one. This led Maneesh in severe depression and out of frustration one time even he thought of leaving Sawai Madhopur. But, the positive attitude and team spirit of a group of 5 old teachers who are with GSK right from the inception of the project did not let Maneesh step down. Somehow they all pulled on till GSK got FCRA approval. During the same time, Mr. Rajesh, who was an efficient project coordinator got a better offer and left GSK. The theater teacher also left. Simultaneously GSK was dealing with the government authorities in adopting 20 government primary schools for which the funding agency - Save the Children was ready to support for 3 years. The district education officer with whom GSK was dealing in this matter got transferred and the new one put a condition to have such project for 5 years which was not agreeable to Save the Children and the whole exercise became futile. Thus, all these unexpected happenings affected the spirit of GSK and so its performance to some extent.

Currently, GSK has applied to Dorabjee Tata Trust for 20 government school adoption project + 2 new model schools + support for existing 3 model schools for 7 years having total budget of 50 lakhs per year and waiting to get approval. Here also, the matter is pending as GSK's 12-A Income Tax certificate is not yet come. Another funding agency called Yatra Foundation has agreed to support the full cost of 3rd model school at Faria village and all sports & physical training facilities for all schools under GSK for two years.

As of now, at Jaganpura, 3 senior trained teachers and 5 new teachers take care of day to day activities. These new teachers are made to work with the old teachers to facilitate on job training. According to Maneesh, those who retain till the end of April will be trained in May and will be made permanent employee of GSK.

Since, Maneesh's wife had some health emergency I went alone to Jaganpura village by a hired vehicle. The hut kind of structure is replaced by 6 brick built barracks. Out of which 5 are for teaching-learning activities and 1 for theater activities. Since, the theater teacher & the project coordinator Mr. Rajesh has left GSK and the new teachers are working with the old teachers, for the time being two premises are kept unused. The children were divided under three sections - pre-primary, primary and upper primary. All the classes were full of well made meaningful educational charts. While talking to children it was learned that most of them were prepared by the older children & the teachers. The carefully made worksheets being used by the children indicated the well planned teaching lessons. Most of the children were engrossed in their work and were enjoying learning in groups. As expected, the old teachers appeared to be expert in handling the children in multi-grade teaching and they were thoroughly aware of know-how of multi-level teaching. However, the new teachers appeared to be confused. They were just doing what they were told to do but did not know the reasons behind the different way of teaching. They are going through the stage of unlearning conventional method of government schools and learning of GSK style of teaching. The children were

also smart enough to know their new teachers' limited capabilities so were taking help of the old teachers.

While talking to the villagers, it was learned that the parents are very happy that their children are learning in true sense. The parents visit school very often and enquire about their child's progress. Even the children talked about their parents' regular visit to the school. Some of the parents' involvement in assessment process, purchasing of teaching materials, organizing Kilol program, managing the school indicated the active involvement of the villagers. Practically all children and villagers I talked to used the word "apni school" (our school) with an emotional attachment. Out of this school, 3 boys & 1 girl got mainstreamed in 8th grade of local government school. Unfortunately the girl fell sick and her parents got her married so she could not continue. Since, this girl is still at her parents' place till she crosses 18 years, the panchayat people & GSK teachers have convinced her parents to allow her to continue her education from this June by taking readmission in the government school. The 3 boys are doing well and attend GSK school after their regular school hours for additional help. The GSK teacher visits the government school where they are mainstreamed and keep track of their smooth integration. According to the GSK teacher Durgaprasad, looking at these mainstreamed boys' learning level, the government school headmaster visited GSK school and learned about GSK approach, teaching-learning methodology and achievement. He spoke to the Block level authority and as a result now the DEO has shown keen interest in GSK implementing the same model in the government schools. The DEO had a meeting with the board members of GSK which also includes the leaders of nearby villages. This whole development made the villagers very proud of their GSK school and now they are ready to demand similar kind of education from the government schools. Thus, in spite of all difficulties, GSK has achieved its goal of demonstrating quality education.

So as of now the number of children studying at Jaganpura school :

SECTIONS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Pre-Primary	20	31	51
Primary	48	41	89
Upper - Primary	05	04	09
Mainstreamed	03	----	03
Not yet enrolled (Pre-primary)	12	03	15
TOTAL	88	79	167

At Bodal, the scene is little different. GSK and villagers are still struggling for the land to construct the school. As of now the school runs under a thatched roof built by the villagers or under the banayan & peepal trees on the village owned fodder land. At the time of the visit, 2 old teachers and 4 new teachers were taking classes. Since, this school has no physical infrastructure / premises, the new teachers were finding it extremely difficult to make the pre-primary children sit at one place in their respective group and do learning activities. The old trained teachers were busy teaching primary children. Most of the children looked overage for their respective classes. While talking to the old teachers it was learned that these overage children are from Mor Dongri village which is right in center of the forest and at the distance of 5 kms from Bodal village. Due to long distance, the parents take late admission. At Mor Dongri, there is no government school so when the children enter GSK school they are totally raw though chronologically overage. At the same time the children who are from Bodal have some learning levels as

most of them are shifted from the government school at the right age. This creates major differences in learning levels of the children and demands high level of understanding and skills from the teachers. However, in the current situation, GSK is helpless and is somehow managing with great difficulties. Maneesh appeared to be feeling guilty that the children are suffering and their precious time is getting wasted.

So number of children studying at Bodal Village :

SECTIONS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Pre-Primary	12	09	21
Primary	54	30	84
Not yet enrolled (Pre-primary)	03	04	07
TOTAL	69	33	112

So the total number of children under Udaypathshala is 257 + not yet enrolled 22 + mainstreamed 3 = 282

For the school land, GSK is interacting with Mr. Amir Sankhla from Canada who owns 1 acre land next to this fodder land. GSK and Mr. Sankhla's family interacted with each other on this for one year through emails & telephone and Sankhla family got convinced to donate the land to GSK but unfortunately for the last three months the communication from Mr. Sankhla is completely stopped and he is not responding to emails from Maneesh. However, Maneesh is very hopeful that one day Mr. Amir will get back to GSK to donate his land as he has no interest in keeping land for himself.

Another option is a one story premises of Mr. Gopiram Patel who is one of the active members of the Bodal gram panchayat and is very much involved in GSK activities. Currently this premise is given on rental to a family but if GSK wants he is ready to give to GSK on nominal rent and also agrees with the idea of constructing 3 classes on its terrace. However, Maneesh would like to wait for Mr. Sankhla's land as along with brick structure it also has scope of a playing ground for outdoor activities.

The Sawaimadhopur Forest Department and Tiger Trust are jointly working hard on getting the villagers vacate their villages which are located in central part of the forest as according to their belief the presence of these villages / human population is hindering the forest conservation and expansion plan. Mor Dongri is one of such villages from where the children walk down to attend the GSK school at Bodal. While listening to the conversation between Maneesh, GSK staff and the Mor Dongri villagers, it was learned that the compensation offered by the government is like peanuts compared to the value of the land they possess and so obviously this offer is not agreeable to the villagers. Maneesh advised them to keep patience and wait to get print out of all literature on law & legislation pertaining to agriculture land owned by the villagers in forest. It is decided that the villagers will study this legal information and then will take informed decisions.

A team of professionals from Nistha Foundation has done evaluation study of GSK model to find out its achievements and gaps. The report is published on Asha for Education's website. Based on the recommendations provided by Nistha team, GSK is trying to fill the gaps. At Bodal also, the people are very happy that their children are far better compared to the government school children. The very fact that many children have shifted from the government school to GSK school indicate the increased understanding of the villagers about quality education.

The 3 teachers out of 8 teachers from both the school who had left GSK during financial crisis, have come back to GSK. As of now they have joined evaluation assignment GSK has taken up on consultancy basis and will be back as teaching staff from the next June.

So the total number of children under Udaypathshala is $257 + \text{not yet enrolled } 22 + \text{mainstreamed } 3 = 282$

Outcome/Impact Assessment: Though, overall performance of the project has declined due to severe financial crisis, the children and the teachers who are still with GSK right from the inception of the project has maintained quality of the project. The learning by the older children is not affected at all as by now they have become independent in learning from reference books on their own and taking help of teachers only in difficulties. Now, GSK has good collection of worksheets practically in all subjects for all three sections so its easy for children to practice on their own and get corrected from the teachers. This is how, the older children have maintained the quality of learning. Thus, in spite of all different types of unexpected turbulences in its roadmap, GSK has achieved its short term goal of demonstrating quality education model to the rural population and the time has come where the local public is asking the government to render similar services by adopting the same approach in public education system. Even, GSK has realized that it has to intervene into public education system to reach out to larger population in cost effective manner as dependency on outside resources makes the whole process too slow to achieve long term goals.

The government officials visiting GSK schools indicate the recognition received by GSK. The higher learning level of the mainstreamed children reflects all the quality input provided by GSK. In time of Gujjar movement, at Bodal, the local people kept the forest entrance gate open for GSK so its school activities does not get disturbed and they removed all teaching materials, sports equipments, and other school owned stuff (worth of Rs.25,000/-) stored in the forest police chowki before putting it under fire. This behavior of the villagers shows the close relations between GSK and its village based stakeholders. The return of the 3 teachers back to GSK also indicates the faith they have in GSK 's approach.

Active participation and strong ownership of the community is a major strength of GSK as without this it is impossible to make an alternative model acceptable to the local people even if it is highly qualitative. The research based qualitative day to day teaching-learning activities are the strong tools in getting desirable results. A few committed well trained staff has proved to be pillars of GSK as without their support it would have been difficult for Maneesh to survive through storm of crises.

In eye of funding agencies, GSK is a costly affair in comparison to other models so it becomes difficult for GSK to market its model. Attrition of teaching staff is one thing GSK has to accept it as it is extremely difficult to retain staff in such hard environment, having a difficult job profile with much longer working hours and that also with no job security.

APPENDIX: Quantitative Measures

Statistical Data of the direct beneficiaries:

This shows that out of 23/12 = 49% of the total no. of dropout is due to joining another school.

In both the schools the dropout rate is highest in 2008 - 09 and for the common reason of joining another school. The reasons behind this is as of now GSK does not have government affiliation so to get mainstreamed the children need to appear for the external exams conducted by the government. This was not acceptable to some of the parents and so they shifted their children to another schools. However, GSK has already applied for affiliation and likely to get by the next academic year. Once, GSK has this affiliation the children can be migrated to another school directly based on GSK's own assessment. GSK also plans to look at the NOS option or skill based training program offered by the Udaipur based NGO called Aajivika.