

## **ASHA VISIT TO DOORSTEPS SCHOOL**

A visit was conducted to Doorsteps School in Pune to observe the educational activities and progress of the school. The main objectives of Doorsteps is to identify children before they reach school going age and prepare them for enrollment, help them sustain themselves in school, provide basic literacy, provide basic work skills such as use of computers and help build children's interest in reading with libraries.

The first place visited was Laman Tanda, which is a new school teaching program started mainly for children of parents who work on construction. The school building currently being used belongs to the Pune Municipal Corporation. The school has three classrooms and a small playground. The children are taught basic literacy till first and second grade level. After this basic training they can enroll in any municipal school. The children are also taught basic skills such as using beads to make necklaces. Most of the children catch things quickly and are soon become good at such skills. There is also a small library with a collection of children's books like Balbharti. The main difficulty in the project is to keep children to attend consistently. A lot of effort is required to convince the parents to let their children attend school. The school building is good for basic instruction but lacks necessities such as electricity.

The second site visited was a school in Shivajinagar. This school was also similar in nature. The school also provides basic education till 4<sup>th</sup> grade. A good point of this school is the availability of computers. All children are instructed in a computer lab so that they develop basic computer skills in MS Word and Excel. Though the children have a difficulty in basic English and understanding what appears on the screen they seem to grasp the use of such tools soon enough. There are also translators available in the computers so children can develop skills at translating documents.

The third site visited was at Wakdewadi. The site had a small school and a municipal school nearby. The site mainly provides basic literacy and serves as a library. The books are distributed to the municipal school and children are encouraged to read and develop interest. The children are also asked questions on what they read to ensure that they understand and are not having any difficulties in what they read. A lot of children check the books out and good use of the library is made. The site also provides an area for children who are in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to study. The area is small but it will soon be improved

so children can concentrate on their SSC exams more effectively. They are also in the process of making a small playground behind the school. In all these schools games and social activities are also organized so children make friends and have something else other than education.



Children at Laman Tanda learning basic skills



Children at Laman Tanda learning in basic grades



Children in Shivajinagar school learning computers