

## **KJSA Trip Report**

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I had a chance to visit the 4 pre-primary schools run by KJHS with help from Asha. Bimal Mondal and his associates showed me all the 4 schools during session. I could talk to the teachers and in some cases , to the the parents of the students and the eneral villagers. Later on, I had a chat with Bimal'da about their immediate needs and future plans.

No of students in each school :

School Name	Total Students	Boys	Girls	Age Group
Gabtala	Approx 100	55	45	3-6 for Pre-primary. They have a primary section as well that runs from the same premises.
Jamtala	Approx 60	15	45	3-6 for Pre-primary. They have a primary section as well that runs from the same premises.
North Keorakhali	Appprox 100	55	45	Just the pre-primary, 3-6 years
South Keorakhali	Approx 80	45	35	Just the pre-primary, 3-6 years

Overall, the attendance seemed to be in the 80%+ range. Might be little less as this is the festival season and some of the students are visiting relatives place.

### **Few general observations applicable to all the schools:**

- All the schools have 3 teaches attached to them. Teachers looked to be attached to the job and the students. In their villege Rs 1000 per month has more value compared to say, Kolkata.
- Students looked enthusiastic and happy to learn things. Also, they seemed to have good rapport with the teaching staff.
- Students did some performance, mostly recitation and small dance s
- In general, the students did not looks mar-nourished. May be 10% would be frair and thin, but mostly they looked healthy.
- They were wearing their best dress for the “occasion” of our visit. So, not sure about their normal day appearance. Some more details later on.
- All the places are using the picture charts extensively for teaching (could make out their regular use by their look ☺ ). Very few books are used. They have a lot of other stuff, like toys and small pieces for getting the kids familiar with the concept of numbers etc. They are kept in a steel trunk and I am not that sure about

their regularity of usage. Although, in Gabtala, the teacher, with help from a few students showed a “demo”.

- The teachers and Bimal'da mentioned about the mid day meal (not in the real sense). It seems they provide biscuits, bananas or puffed rice everyday. However, I was hopping between schools and could not personally see what were being served.
- None of the schools have a toilet.

**Some specifics:**

1. Gaabtala



- Schools rooms are small in size for the number of students they hold.
- The condition of the roof is poor.
- Mud flooring.
- Has a tube well just next to the school.
- No electricity.

## 2. Jamtala





- Room size is bigger
- Flooring is better compared to the previous one
- Electricity ? (Cannot recall now. Probably it was not there)
- Roof condition is bad, has holes all over (worse than the previous one)
- Drinking water is carried from a nearby tube well in plastic bottles.

### 3. North Keorakhali





- Has cement flooring
- Room is spacious, though little dark
- Roof condition is better than the previous two.
- Has electricity and couple of working ceiling fans.
- Water is available from a tube well nearby

#### 4. South Keorakhali





- Room is big enough with good ventilation and a cement flooring
- No electricity
- Only school with a concrete roof. But the walls and foundation have developed cracks. Most probably due to the weight of the roof. To my untrained eye, it looked bad, although not alarming.
- Local people were most vocal here about the shortcomings of the school. Especially about the cracks. Also, they want a balcony to be built and also has a series of other complaints (including non availability of a tubewell nearby and the bad condition of the approach roads, which I explained are out of our scope).

#### Discussion with Bimal-da:

Had a chat with him in detail about the operation of the schools.

At present, the funding etc. are just enough to keep the schools running. But some repair works need to be undertaken before next monsoon. He did not mention the need about getting stationary goods (books, pen, pencils etc) immediately. Mentioning this point as Ketan (?) mentioned having a discussion with him in this topic.

The mid day meal has reduced in quantity and quality, although, he feels that the current arrangement is OK and can be continued. I personally feel otherwise though..

The teachers salary is less but at present, it has lower priority.

The main thing he stressed is taking some repair work for the schools before the next monsoon. I enquired about the individual schools and got a rough estimate for them (all figures in INR).

- Roof repairing at Gaabtala : 6-7k for replacing/patching the broken asbestos pieces and re-adjusting the slope of the roof.
- Roof repairing at JAmtala : 15k. Currently, it is covered with tin sheets with holes all over them. It has to be replaced totally.
- South Kaorakhali : the cracks in the pillars and on the walls need to be repaired. Some additional pillars need to be erected to distribute the load (cost 15k). Plus, if a balcony needs to be built, there would be additional cost of 5k.
- The schools need a toilet each. As of now, Bimal-da has a plan to build them on his own.

That is all. I think KJHS is doing a good job with help from Asha. The enthusiasm of the teachers and the students are commendable. I personally feel we should put stress on providing better food. About the repair works, at least some basic work must be done before the next monsoon. Among all the schools, the first two look to be in dire need for some action. The last one, where the villagers are most vocal, is the best of the lot in my

opinion. I have few more photographs and a lot of video clippings recorded. Would upload them and update you with the links later.