

Name of the visitor: Kousik Chatterjee

Date of visit: 8th December 2016

I had a chance to visit the 4 schools on 8th December 2016 when the schools were on session. I had a chat with Bimal-da, the main person of KJHS. Out of the 4 schools, the ones at North Keorakhali, South Keorakhali and Gabtola looks to be working as usual. But there is some land related dispute for the school building on Jamtala.

What I could gather from Bimal-da is that towards the end of November, the part of the roof of the Jamtala school building caved in. It is not a big part from what I could see. The teachers were inclined to continue the classes, but Bimalda had stopped the classes, in case the rest of the roof also falls off their support during the school session. Apparently, the building runs on a donated land. And the family which had donated the place were giving some hints to take back the land, given the soaring land price and the proximity of the school building from the main road. Once the regular session stopped due to the roof issue, the family took control of the building and the rooms were being used to store hay and other agricultural products, when I visited. The neighbors were a bit hostile and prevented me from taking any photographs. They openly told that they do not want to give the rooms back for running the school.

Bimalda mentioned that there is some village committee meeting planned mid of December to discuss this matter. In case the family do not agree to vacate the rooms for the school, Bimalda has thought of some alternative. Apparently, he has some piece of land, not too far from the place which already has some small building which can work as a makeshift school. Due to lack of time, I could not visit this potential new site though.

Overall, in the other three schools the attendance seemed to be in the 70% range in most of the schools.

About the condition of the buildings and the toilets:

- The recent demonetization has affected this effort. The Gabtala building already had a makeshift arrangement (not in a good shape though) and I could see some building material already procured for making the new toilet adjacent to the existing one. The overall shape of the school building looks better than my last visit with the roof being repaired and the earth tiles been replaced by corrugated tin sheet partly.
- The toilet is half finished in the south Keorakhali school (check the photograph). The work has stopped due to currency issue and Bimal-da is planning to resume once the flow of money eases a bit.

The state of the building is not very good though, with the doors and windows mostly fallen off the structure. These need to be built before the onset of the next monsoon and building a small verandah would help protect the wooden doors from water.

Bimalda mentioned that an estimate is already shared for this work.

- North Keorakhali School is in good shape, being adjacent to the residence of Binalda.

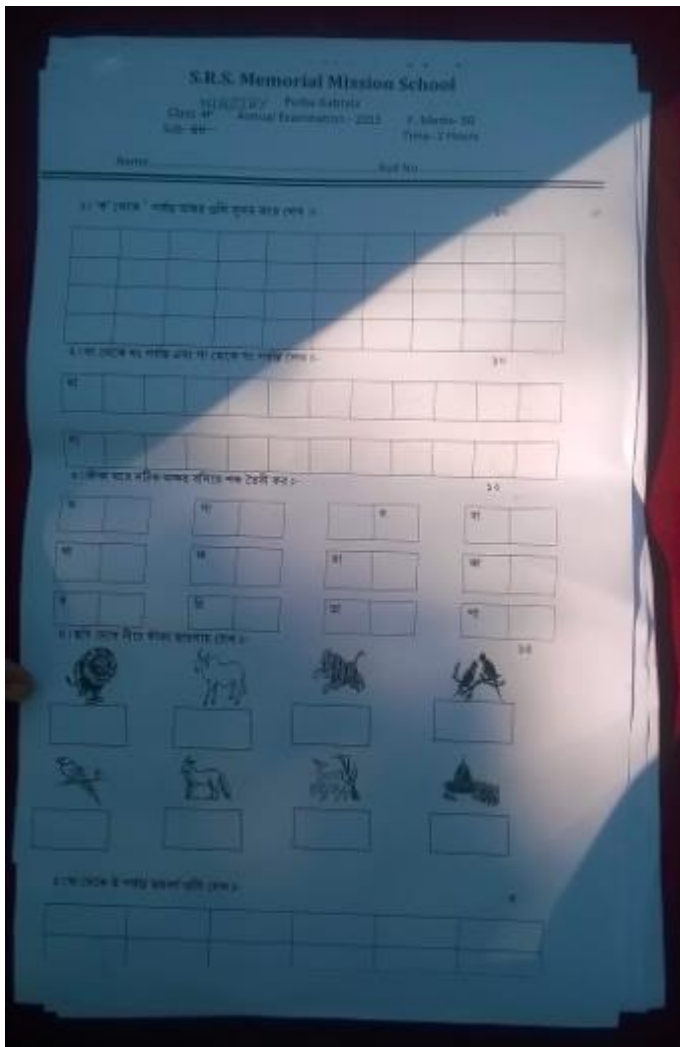
Few general observations:

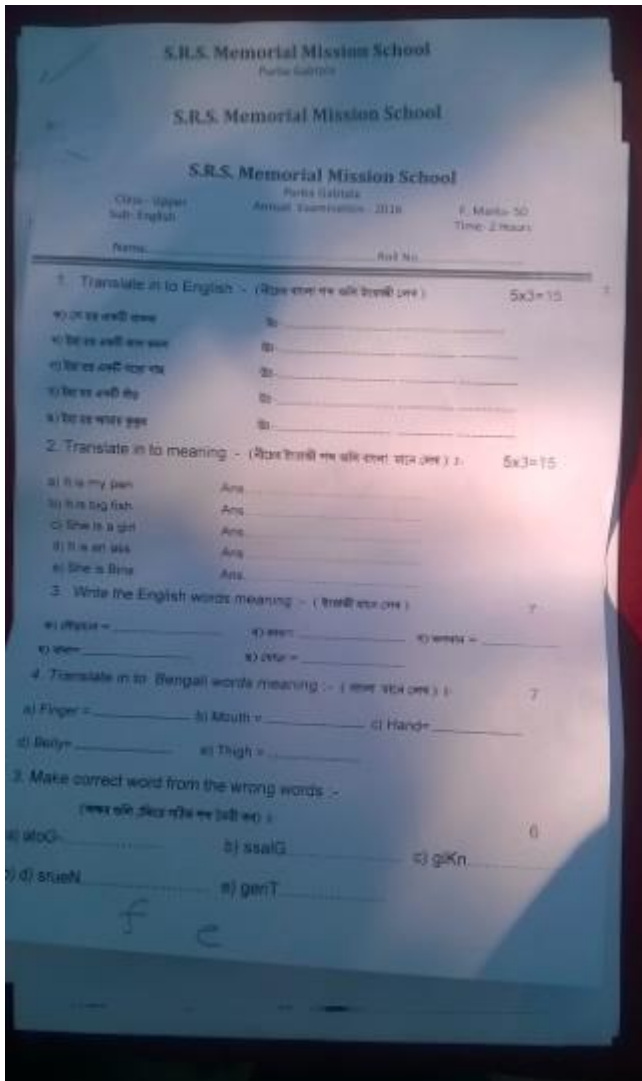
- All the schools have good attendance.
- The annual exam was underway when I visited the Gabtala school.

Some pictures:

1. Purba Gabtala School







2. North Keorakhali Schools



3. South Keorakhali school

The half-finished toilet



