

### **Summary:**

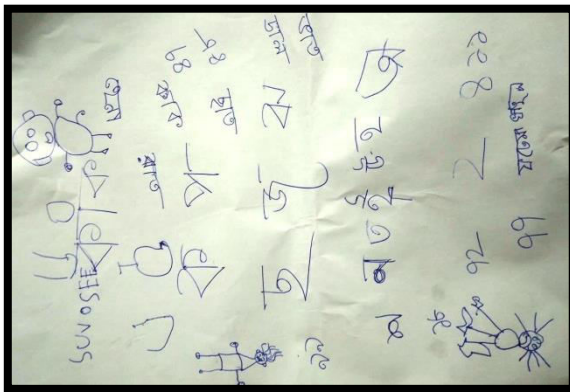
I spent one hour with the nursery class kids. With the highest class, I checked if they can identify alphabets (English & Bengali) or write names. Then I went to Sahibana center and spent half an hour with the kids. After coming back to main center, I spent 2 hrs with the coaching center kids - Class 1 to 10. With Class VI-VIII, I spent more time. Interactions involve simple academic games, math tables, operation check and vocabulary check.

### **Details:**

I have reached Hridaypur intersection of Barasaat around 2 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018. I met Mr Nazmul, a teacher of Institute of Social Work (ISW) in that junction. He took me to ISW office in [West Ichapur](#), ~2 km from Hridaypur/Dakbunglow intersection. I was greeted by Nupur Sanyal (General Secretary) from ISW. The nursery class was ongoing in one of the buildings. There were around 50 kids in the age group 3 to 5 divided into three different groups. Some of them have recently joined. This pre-primary school “Shishu Vikas Bharati” runs from 11 am to 3-30 pm. I took photos of each kid groups and spent some time with the highest age group. They can identify alphabets in Bengali and English as well as numbers (up to 100). Some of them wrote their names and drew mango/people/flower when I asked. One floor above, there are students in Class 1 or Nursery who go to Govt schools and come for extra support. Overall, the facilities are good and the children are taken cared of well. They are also given nutrition support (there were eggs, rice, dal in the menu that day).



**The gate to the campus and the poster of the pre-primary school**



**Writings and smiles from the kids of the highest age group**



**Kids from other groups**



**Me (Padmanava Sen) posing with the kids**



**Teachers with the kids**



**The kids upstairs (for remedial support)**

Then I went to Sahibana center around 10 km away. Two teachers - Mr Nazmul and Mr Lekha Mitra accompanied me in the auto. It took around 30 minutes. There are two such centers in that area and two teachers come 3 days a week in each center. The centers cater to children of Brick Kiln workers. While going, I saw many Brick Kilns and Mrs Mitra mentioned they got good traction with the owners of these two. In most cases, they do not allow to run any school for the kids as these kids work with their parents in these Brick Kilns. Like any Brick Kiln, the living conditions are dismal for the workers. The rooms have very low heights. The workers are mostly from Bihar. There are some from West Bengal too. I came to know ISW not only teach them basics but also about hygiene. The kids usually take bath the days they come to the center. Most kids knew alphabets and simple words. The older



kids are of the age group 9-10. I met two kids from Canning area of Sundarbans, WB who settled and they started going to formal schools (and come for tuition support). But most kids go back to Bihar during monsoons and only study for 2-3 months at the Government schools of their village. So they are dependent on this center. One big challenge is the changing groups of workers. Mrs Lekha Mitra gave me more details about how they teach.



**The brick Kiln and the living of conditions of workers & the owner**



**Kids in the center**

I came back to their main campus. There are two buildings. One building has students from Class 1 to 6. The other building has Class 7 to 10 and 12. Their teachers mentioned that the Class 12 they will discontinue after this year. They have discontinued 11. For Class 12, only English classes are going on. I went from class to class and asked the students their names, their favourite and most hated subjects. English as a subject is usually the most hated one. I spent most times with Class 5, 6, 7 & 8. The students come from neighbouring areas. They seemed very comfortable in the classes. English reading was a bit slow even at Class 8. Bengali reading was very good. Most students know tables up to 12. Their vocabulary was

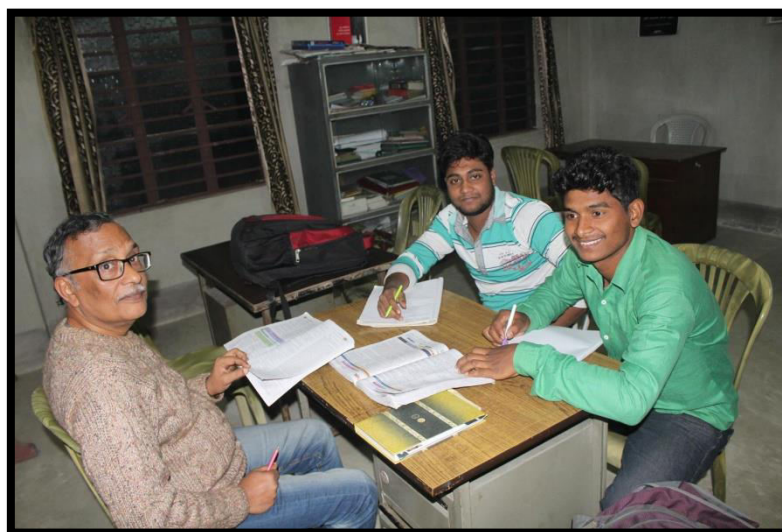
satisfactory but sentence construction was not. With Class 9 and 10 students, I talked about their ambitions. Most students may take arts/commerce streams rather than science (pdue to financial reasons). Among the two Class 12 students, one is studying commerce (studying with ISW for a long time) and other student Arts. After I was done, the students received some snacks. I ate some snacks and bid good bye to Nupur Sanyal & team.



**Class 7 and 8 students**



**Class 9 and 10 students**



**Class XII students (English class)**





**Class 1 and 2 students**



**Class 3 and 4 students**



**Smiling kids of Class V**



**Class VI students**



**Room partitions and computers for training**



**Me and Nupur Sanyal (ISW)**



**Overall Impression** - The campus of ISW is very good. The classrooms are spacious and the teacher-student relationship seemed very nice. The pre-primary school kids are well taken cared of. The Sahibana center is doing a great service to the kids of Brick Kiln. About the afternoon (4-30 to 7 pm) coaching classes, it is need of the hour. Almost all kids go to Government schools in day time and the teacher-student ratios in these schools are very poor. Also due to the lack of pass/fail systems, most Government school teachers give suggestions for exams. So, finally serious teachings happen in support centers like this. Given, ISW does not run any formal school for the age group of 6- 14, there is no issue as far as Right-to-Educations rules are concerned. A little more detailed discussions with Asha supporting chapter regarding computer training of the students may help.



**I returned home with their beautiful smiles in my mind.**

**– Dr Padmanava Sen (Asha Bangalore)**