

Kamalakar Memorial Trust Site visit report

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Project website: <http://www.kmctrust.in/>

Summary: Sri Vikas Bharati school run by Kamalakar Memorial Trust had a fun filled and successful academic year during 2014-15. The school currently has 217 students. The school had a very good year both academically as well as extra-curricularly. The Organisation celebrated its 25th anniversary this year in March. Some of the highlights from the school from the past academic year are:

- 1) The partnership established with Pratham continues to enrich the learning environment w.r.t to science for 6th and 7th graders. 8 and 9 th graders will also get to watch the videos this year.
- 2) The school has organized a field trip to a plastic industry in December - 2014 for 7,8 and 9th grades.
- 3) School leased out a new playground.
- 4) New classes constructed - The whole school now runs in one school building.
- 5) As with every year, the school continued to organize health check up camps at the school premises.
- 6) The school students have once again showed their high caliber artistic skills by winning prizes in various city wide extra-curricular competitions.

Goals/ action items for the next academic:

- Career counselling
- Communication skills improvement or spoken english
- Teacher training and resources

Pratham Partnership:

Sri Vikas Bharati school partnered with Pratham starting last academic year to improve the learning levels of students(6 and 7th grades) at school. This was done with the goal of reducing the learning deficit in average and slow learners in the classroom. This year 8th and 9th graders are also being given the learning material.

Pratham has provided videos and slides that teachers can use to teach the subject material in class. Pratham has conducted teacher training to help the teachers effectively use the material in their class. The teacher's conduct two teaching sessions per week using the Pratham material for Science and Math. Pratham volunteers also get involved(every 4-6 months) to monitor the overall progress as well as to conduct exams. Last year two exams have been conducted by Pratham volunteers. In addition, spot quizzes are also conducted by the Pratham volunteers in science and math to check for learning gaps.

Pro's :

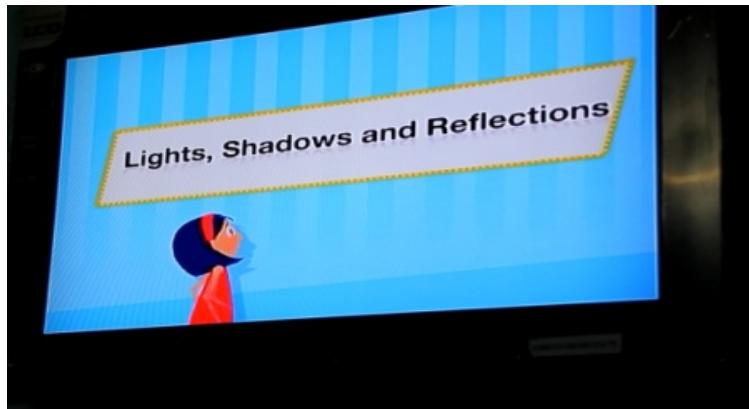
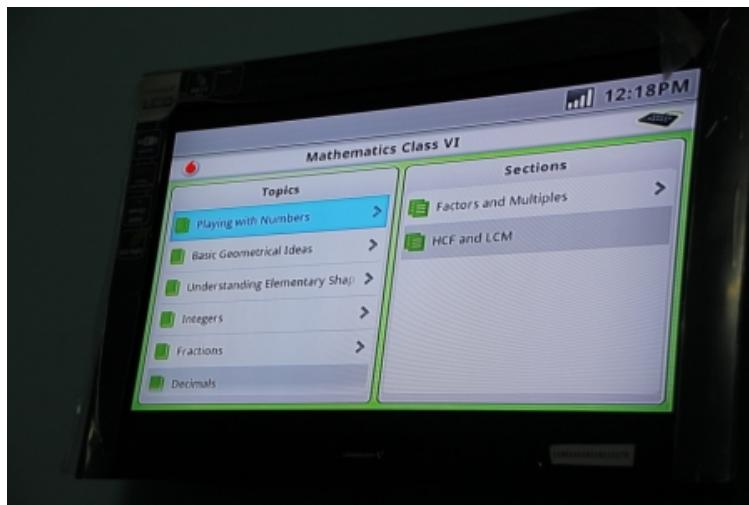
- The content provided by Pratham is in video(animations) format.

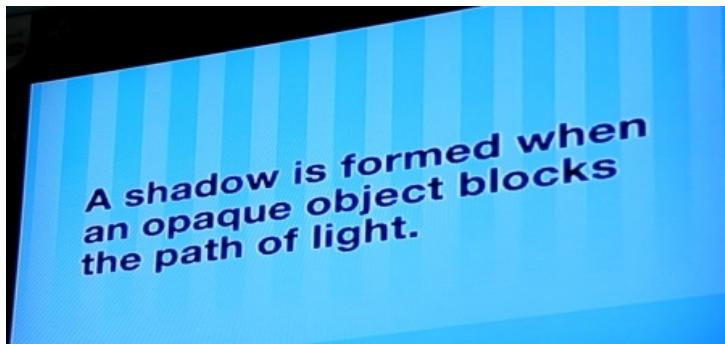
- The short animation videos tend to grab the attention of young kids and I could see a high degree of enthusiasm and motivation in students in attending these sessions. (Esp.Slow/shy/dull learners who may not be paying attention when the class is in regular session).
- Videos are in Indian english with subtitles(in english) and structures around Indian scenarios which many kids can understand and relate.

Con's :

The content provided covers only the basics in a minimalistic way.

The videos are short and there will still be a good bit of ground to cover for the teacher after using the videos.





Enhancing exposure and awareness through field trips & guest speakers:

Last month the school students (7th,8th and 9th graders) were taken on a field trip to a plastic industry. This trip was a very good learning exposure for kids where they were able to see how different kinds of plastic items were made. (Especially bags and covers).

The school is planning for a field trip to a planetarium.

The school is also regularly inviting various guest speakers to discuss topics like personality development, job markets etc. Last year a total of such 5 seminars have been conducted. In addition a professor from outside the school is conducting english learning session for students.





Extra curricular :

The school focuses and organises a lot of extra curricular activities throughout the year. Like Dance, Drama, Debates, Essay writing and painting. The school feels extra curricular activities are very beneficial for students all round development. Students will have a chance to showcase their non academic talent/potential(working skills, people skills, and more) and in the process feel a sense of achievement.

Message oriented Skits/Dramas:

The school has been incorporating topics relating to social issues into the extra-curricular activities that students participate in. For example, the dramas and skits have been performed by the students on topics such as Girl empowerment, cleanliness etc.

The themes have been changing depending on the current need of the school or the society.

Some themes on which they have worked in the last year

1. Veeranari Manulu (Brave women who fought for a cause)

2. Girl empowerment and equality.
3. Swachh Bharat - Rally.



Swachh Bharat Rally



8th grade girls enacting the girl right song (snapshot)

New classrooms and a Playground:

The school now runs only in one building rather than two separate building. Considering the increase in rent/lease amount of the new school building, the project invested approximately 4 lakhs last year to have 8 new classrooms constructed on the first floor of the old school building. They have also leased out a piece of land(300 sq yard) right opposite to the school to be used as a playground for kids.





Interaction with teachers

This year most of the teachers have good qualifications as compared to the previous years. When I interacted with teachers they expressed the desire for teacher training. They expressed interest in learning better techniques for classroom management, teaching methodologies among other things.

They also expressed a desire to learn the basic web/internet surfing to be able to effectively search for authentic resources. At present only a couple of teachers are able to do some basic internet searching.

Interaction with 8 and 9th grade students

While interacting with high school children, the students expressed a strong interest in learning how to speak English better. They told me that the reason they attend this school is because it is in english medium and it presents an opportunity for them to learn to interact in English. They see a sense of empowerment in having an ability to speak in English and feel that it will help them secure a good employment.



Challenges:

Project needs to do a lot of unlearning to do about learning and schooling.

Budget: An increase in funding is needed keeping in view the high inflation and teacher attrition. There is a high turnover rate of teachers since the pay is much below the market rate for the qualifications they bring.

In 2014-15 academic year the project had to increase the salaries of the teachers in the range of Rs. 500 - Rs. 2,000 (depending on teacher qualification, job duties etc). This is a steep increase as compared to previous academic year.

The project is requesting for an increase in funding to offset the increase in teachers salaries. Proposed increase of funding Rs/- 500 for 13 teachers and Rs/- 200 for 2 support staff.

Originally proposed Annual Budget in Nov 2014: \$5,200

First Installment: \$2,600

Revised proposal for annual budget: \$5,200 + \$1,250 (Please see details below)

Increase in salaries :

- 1) Teacher @ Rs. 500* X 13 teachers X 11 months = Rs. 71,500
- 2) Support staff Rs. 200 X 2 staff X 11 months = Rs. 4,400

Total requested increase in budget this academic year: Rs. 75,900 (\$1,250 @ Rs.61/\$)

The total requested budget for the year 2015- 2016 changes to \$5200+ \$1250 = **\$6,450**

Requested second installment with proposed increase = \$2,600 + \$625 = **\$3,225**