



EDUCATION FOR RURAL CHILDREN

Supported by: Asha for Education

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SevaMandir

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Executive Summary

Asha for Education (AFE) has been supporting Seva Mandir's (SM) Education programs since 2008 to 2018. In the last year, the support from AFE has ensured access to quality education to reach total **2,041** children in which 1,355 children through SM's Shiksha Kendra or bridge schools, 25 children through residential learning camp program and 661 children through activity centers through the grant amount of Rs. **3,629,000** for 2017-2018. The relationship with AFE is becoming stronger with every passing year as it has not only provided financial support to the education program but also helped to strengthen the program, through the feedback provided to SM.

Seva Mandir's Education Program

Given that poverty and lack of quality education are the key factors that lead to a child not going to school, Seva Mandir's education program attempts to ensure primary education to out-of-school children through Shiksha Kendras and Residential learning camps (RLCs). Other interventions include activity centers at government schools and scholarship programme to ensure continuity of education. Currently, SM facilitates 151 Shiksha Kendras (SKs) in which more than 5,500 out-of-school children aged 6 to 14 are studying.

SECTION 1: Shiksha Kendras

Introduction to Kotra Block:

Asha for education is supporting the functioning of Shiksha Kendras in Kotra block, which is the most remotely located block of Seva Mandir's work area. Since 1986, Seva Mandir has been working in Kotra block, with projects in 100+ villages. Located in the southwestern part of the Udaipur District, Kotra is a characterized by a hilly geography with villages made up of many hamlets scattered and spread out over a large area. In Kotra, 95% of the population is tribal primarily consisting of the Bhil, Meena and Garasia groups. The literacy rate of this region at 20% ¹is the lowest in comparison to other work areas of Seva Mandir.

¹ Census 2011, Govt. of India (2014). District Census Handbook (DCHB), Udaipur. : Census 2011, pp.26-27.

An SK at Merpur village

About 132 kilometers from Udaipur city is a village called Merpur. Like most places in Udaipur district, the houses are spread out in hilly areas and main source of income is agriculture and casual and daily wage labour.



There are a total of 123 houses in Merpur of which 45 houses are in Sinera hamlet of Merpur. In 2017, Seva Mandir was approached for a Shiksha Kendra in Sinera hamlet. A study was carried out to find out number of children in the village were out of school and assess the need.

On 5th July 2017 the Shiksha Kendra was opened in Sinera hamlet At present, a total of 48 children are enrolled in the Shiksha Kendra. Sita Kumari is a 11 year old girl, studying in the Kendra. Before joining the Kendra she used to stay home, tend to cattle, work in the fields and help with household chores. The Shiksha Kendra has been a great outlet of imagination for her. She loves drawing and has a lot of friends at the Shiksha Kendra.

During the financial year 2017-18, the support from Asha for Education ensured primary education for 1,355 children through 29 SKs and 42 instructors in Kotra Block, the details of which is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Details: of the number of SKs, teachers and enrollment of children.

Block	SKs in March 2018	No. of Instructors	Enrollment till May 2018		
			Boys	Girls	Total
Kotra	29	42	803	552	1,355

New Enrollment

During the academic year 2017-18, 377 (27%) new children took admissions in these 29 Shiksha Kendras. Of these 377 new entrants, 42% were girls.

Enrollment in Schools for further education:

Students from SKs are encouraged to enroll in a government school once they have strong competencies in language and mathematics. In 2018, 380 children which are 28% of the total students graduated from Shiksha Kendra's and were enrolled in government schools.

The class-wise break up of these children is given in Table 2. In the academic session, 78% of the children got admission in class 5 & 6, with the help of instructors.

Table 2: Class wise break up of graduated children

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
1-3	33	22	55
4	24	3	27
5	177	111	288
6	6	4	10
Total	240	140	380

Evaluation of Children

Seva Mandir organizes two evaluations in every academic year at SKs. The objective of the evaluation is to assess and understand the learning level of children. We conducted half yearly evaluation in the month of November 2017 and annual in the month May 2018.

In the half yearly evaluation 2017, total 1,323 children participated of which 61% were boys and 39% girls. The evaluation found 509 (38%) children at level 1, 478(36%) children at level 2 and 336(26%) children level 3.

In the annual evaluation, total 1266 children participated of which 61% were boys and 39% girls. The evaluation found 261(21%) children at level 1, 599(47%) children at level 2 and 406 (32%) children at level 3.

Nov-17				May 18			
Level	Boy	Girl	Total	Level	Boy	Girl	Total
0&1	298	211	509(38%)	0&1	149	112	261(21%)
2	300	178	478(36%)	2	364	235	599(47%)
3	214	122	336(26%)	3	261	145	406(32%)
Total	812(61%)	511(39%)	1,323	Total	774(61%)	492(39%)	1,266

Looking at the both results, it is that children of level 1 decreased from 38% to 21%. Level 2 children increased from 36% to 47% and children in level 3 increased from 26% to 32%. So this result shows the progress in children's learning.

Evaluation of those children who participated in both exams							
Nov-17				May 18			
Level	Boy	Girl	Total	Level	Boy	Girl	Total
0&1	198	156	354(34%)	0&1	100	78	178(17%)
2	249	134	383(38%)	2	287	187	474(47%)
3	177	104	281(28%)	3	237	129	366(36%)
Total	624(61%)	394(39%)	1,018	Total	624(61%)	394(39%)	1,018

The above table shows the comparative results of 1,018 children appeared in both evaluations (Nov 17 & May 18). The data shows that there are 61% boys and 39 % girls.

As per the common results children in level 1 decreased from 34% to 17%. Children in level 2 increased from 38% to 46 % and children in level 3 increased from 28% to 36% that shows the progress in children's learning.

Participation in Literary Festival:

Apart from the regular activities at the Shiksha Kendra's, Seva Mandir conducted literary festival in collaboration with Plan India children in the month of March 2018. The purpose of this event was to provide space and opportunity to demonstrate their talent and skills to their peers, youth and adults in a joyous and playful environment. The sessions at the village level included story-reading and story-telling sessions by the children and sharing of their thoughts regarding the story. A 10 year old boy of a SK at Holi fala, Kada village of Jhadol block said ***"I like sessions like this where I get to read new books and do story telling!"***

888 children from 21 Shiksha Kendras had participated in this festival across the field areas of Seva Mandir. These sessions had also catered to 284 children of 4 SKs which are supported by ASHA. Out of the total 888, 10 children were selected to participate in State workshop which took place at Jaipur in the month of April, among which 5 children were from ASHA supported SKs. They attended a gender

workshop is additions with the story reading and story-telling sessions in Jaipur. They got the chance to improve on their expressions and got an introduction to identifying the gender stereotypes prevalent in the society through discussions and reading texts.

Capacity Building of instructors

Instructor Meetings: During this reporting period, 12 monthly meetings of SK instructors were held in Kotra block. The agenda of these meetings included:-

1. Sessions on place value, simple word problems on daily use mathematics, various exercises based on comprehensions in Hindi language were conducted. Pedagogical and content knowledge, both in mathematics and in Language (Hindi) were discussed and worksheets on these topics were solved accordingly.
2. Details about new admission, graduate students, demand for books and stationary and any other issues related to SKs were collected.
3. Discussion over the visits to the SKs and issues found during those visits like cleanliness, making the centers more attractive and friendly, using of teaching materials etc.

Preparation for Annual Instructors' Training:

An in-house training of trainers (TOT) meeting was conducted from 11th to 14th Sep' 17 to design the curriculum for the Annual Instructor training. After analyzing our resources and in order to get more qualitative results we decided to conduct Annual Instructors training in two batches, one in Oct' 17 and the other in the year 2018. The sessions were planned on mathematics and language pedagogy.

Annual Instructors' Training

Annual training of instructors forms an integral part of Seva Mandir's Education program. The training also proves to be a forum where theoretical knowledge meets practical experience enabling both the



resource persons and the instructors to learn from each other.

An annual training for instructors of Jhadol, Kotra, Badgaon, Girwa, and Kherwara block was organized from 9th October till 14th October 2017 in Kaya Learning Centre. The training majorly focussed on an understanding of multi-level teaching. The sessions were equally divided among three subjects – English, Hindi, and Maths. Subject wise activities linked to the learning levels of students (i.e. A, B and C) facilitated the learning process. Various new activities were introduced during the training in all the three subjects–

1. English flash cards were used for vocabulary building; activities were designed to teach rhyming words, read aloud sessions with proper prosody was carried out.
2. In Hindi, a bit of grammar was talked about, then discussions on consonant, *anunasikswar* (is a diacritic dot used to mark a type of nasal sound and used in a number of Indic scripts), use and difference between *bindu* and *Chandra bindu* (It usually means that the previous vowel is nasalized). A writing workshop was conducted in Hindi on various topics followed by an interactive session.
3. Maths training included simple and advanced level addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. It also included word problems, ranging from simple to advanced level.
4. An activity based session on maps was kept to introduce geography.

Overall, the training offered new activities to the instructors working on their existing capacities as well as giving them challenging tasks for their own learning.

An instructor who prevented the migration of a child

Nirmal Kumar, a child from Tiloi village of Bikarni zone of Kotra block had studied from a Shiksha Kendra in his village. He has his mother, 2 brothers and 3 sisters at his home. He was enthusiastic about his studies and extra -curricular activities. In the year 2017, he got enrolled into class 5 of a government school in his village, where he was regular in the beginning but later on he became irregular in school. He rather started spending time in grazing goats and play with his friends. His friends are working as hotel laborers in Sirohi and Samarpur, which started influencing Nirmal. Then, Nirmal expressed his interest in working like them. His parents and his relatives tried to make him understand but he started running to the nearby forest. The parents were very concerned about him and shared this concern with Nirmal's instructor at SK. Nirmal had a good amount of respect for his instructor and used to listen to him always. When he talked to him, he couldn't ignore the words of his instructor, when he made him understand the importance of education. Now he goes to school every day along with his sister and he is thankful to his instructor for showing him the right direction. Recently, when asked about his aspiration, he said that he wants to become a teacher in the future.

Community Participation

Shiksha Shulk –Education Fees

At all the bridge schools (SKs), a token fee of Rs.150 is contributed by the parents. In this academic year a total amount of Rs. 2,12,350 was expected from the 29 SKs and total 76 % of the total amount was received. 151 children's Shiksha Shulk was waived off. The parents and the village committee decided and utilized the collected fees for the purchase of school uniforms for the children. With the time fees collection at the SKs is increasing both in terms of regularity and amount.

Table 3: Fee Collection

Block	Expected (in Rs.)	Received (in Rs.)	%
Kotra	2,12,350	162300	76

Parents Teachers' Meeting

All the instructors organized monthly or bi-monthly parent-teacher meetings at their respective SKs. In these meetings, discussions took place on various issues such as the children's academic performance, absenteeism, hygiene etc. Moreover, discussions on collection and utilization of fees were also took place in these meetings. Small cultural functions were also organized at many SKs on Independence Day which was followed by some informal discussions among the community. The community's participation in their children's education is necessary hence they are always encouraged to participate more in the coming future.

National Festival Celebration and other events

Every SK celebrated Independence Day on 15th of August in which village committee members, parents and other members of village had also took part. Children did march past and various cultural activities like dance, poetry and drama in front of the community members. Children's day celebration was organized in Bikarani zone in which

450 children participated from 7 SKs, in which the children took part in several games and cultural activities. Moreover, these children were told about the importance of this day and their rights.



SECTION 2: Residential Learning Camps



During this year, 3 residential learning camps were organized at Mohan Singh Mehta Rural Training Center, Kaya in Udaipur. The purpose of these camps is to bring the most deprived, out of school working children under the education net and to enable them to read and write independently. All camps were fully residential for both children and teachers.

Most of the children who participated in these camps come from very poor families and either they have never been to school or dropped out at very early age.

A total of 227 children (126 boys and 101 girls) from 40 villages participated in 3 Residential Learning Camps in the year 2017-2018. Out of these 227 children, 100 children participated in one seasonal camp (May-June 2017). All these 100 children who attended only one camp in this financial year had attended 2 camps in previous financial year. After attending the May camp, 87 children out of 100 joined schools, 13 children could not join schools due to their family reasons.

117 children participated in the two camps held in Oct – Dec 2017 and Jan – Feb 2018 respectively. Of these 117 children, 30% had never been to school before coming to the camp while 70% children went to school for some time but dropped out because of various social and financial constraints or due to lack of quality education at their schools.

All of these children are engaged in various kind of work while they are not in camp. 71% children were engaged in cattle grazing, 15% children were working as laborers in construction and agriculture and some of them were also migrated to Gujarat for work.

Here is the story of a girl who had attended the November and January camp of the academic year 2017-18.



Reema Gamar:

Reema is 11 years old and she is from Sarli village of Kotra block in Udaipur district. She had studied up to 2nd grade after which her parents asked her to not to go to school and do household work. Later, she started working as a laborer at a brick kiln in Gujarat, where she used to get 150 rupees as her daily wage. She worked there for a month and gave all her earnings to her mom, from which she said that her mother bought her clothes and a nose pin. She said that her parents got to know about the camp from an SM employee, after which they sent her to the camp. She says that after coming to the camp she got to learn how to write her name, learnt names of fruits and animals, addition, subtraction,

increasing-decreasing order, and also learnt some English words with their meanings. She says she likes to use computer at the camp, where she learnt how to switch on/off the computer and that now she can even paint using computer. Besides, she says that after coming to the camp she has learnt to wash her hands before eating, to brush her teeth, bathe inside a bathroom, use toilet and not to defecate in the open. She is back for the second camp and would like to continue her further studies in a school near her village after the completion of the camp.

Teachers' Selection and Training:

During the entire year in total 39 (19 female and 20 male) teachers worked in learning camps. Teachers' selection and training is a crucial aspect of the learning camps. Before the beginning of the learning camp, teachers were selected through a written test that tested their basic abilities in Hindi, Mathematics, reasoning and their overall attitude towards children. Total 3 trainings were held for the teachers at Kaya Training Centre.

Assessments:

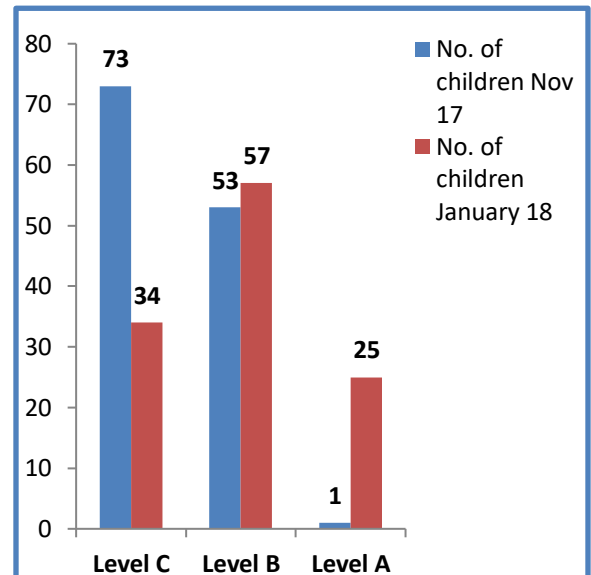
Regular assessment is an important part of the camps to mark the progress made by children and to make arrangements to cater to their specific needs.

The first camp of May was last camp for the children of academic year 2016-17. In this camp, nearly 67% children cleared Level A.

In the November camp of academic year 2017-18, 127 new children attended the camp. In their baseline assessment it was found that all these children were either in Level B or level C. After completing two camps the progress in children's learning level is seen in the graph.

Table 4: Evaluation results

Camp	Level A	Level B	Level C	Total
Nov' 17	1	53	73	127
Jan '18	25	57	34	116
Total	93	140	109	342



Activities: Learning at Residential learning camp

- **Language Learning-Hindi:**

Children learnt more on language by hearing stories from their instructors, followed by guided reading. After the reading sessions, the instructors let the children do the grammar and comprehension exercises prepared by the instructors from the story books. They were taught Hindi through story books. Many of the children had learnt reading and writing of simple words and sentences by the end of the first camp.

- **Mathematics:**

By the end of the first camp, most of the children had got the idea of counting and doing addition and subtraction of two digit numbers using concrete method as well as using abstract method. At the end of the second camp, most of the children were able to do word problems on basic mathematical operations.

- **English:**

English is a language which they have learnt for the first time in their life, thus making it a third language for them, second language being Hindi. Children were taught names of regular objects found in their classrooms. For better learning of this new language, instructors have put hangings of basic words all across the campus, from which the children can learn while they are roaming around.

- **Computer:**

There is a computer classes for children in the camp. Each child gets 2 hours of computer classes in a week. By the end of the first camp, the children were able to switch on/off a computer, and paint some shapes and write their names in Hindi. In the second camp, many of them have learnt to write their names as well as name of few objects along with drawing and coloring of the pictures of the objects.

- **Crafts and other activities:**

There is an activity period for children, where they learn to do crafts, like making flowers and other decorative items using which they develop creativity and problem solving skills.

- **Sports and cultural activities:**

All the children get to play different sports like, volleyball, cricket, kho-kho, basketball, badminton, and kabaddi after their regular classroom sessions, during the evening. As a part of cultural activities they use to play Garba (Folk dance form) in night.

- **Library:**

A library is setup in the activity room of the campus, where there are many short storybooks and picture storybooks both in Hindi and English. There is a table kept on a verandah outside the activity room, where a few books are kept for a day, so that the children get to see these books often and try to read



them. It was seen that many children try to read these books during the break time. These books are changed every day with the rest of the books kept in the library, so that many books come under the notice of the children and they try to read them. This has been helping in improving their reading skills.

- **Health check-ups and balanced diet**

Weekly health checkups and regular medical aid were provided to the children during the camp. Children were provided a balanced diet of milk, roti, rice, vegetables and pulses daily to build their strength. To ensure good health, nutritional supplements, and fruits were provided to the children during the camp. There was also a continued focus on sanitation, hygiene, cleanliness, and nutrition in the camp.



Exposure Visits:

1. Press Visit:

50 children were taken for a press visit on 3rd June, 2016. A detailed demonstration of press functionality was shown to the children. For the first time, Children learned the process of printing, cutting and binding of publication material. Children were very curious to see the process a book undergoes before coming to their hands.

2. Celebration Mall Visit:

The celebration Mall, Udaipur has been partially supporting Residential learning camp since a few years. During this camp also, all the camp participants were invited to the mall for a small visit. There students enjoyed the magic show and other activities performed for them in the mall, some students also performed on the stage. The children were given school bags, hygiene kits etc along with the refreshment. It was a fun filled outing and children enjoyed their visit to the mall.

3. St. Christopher School visit:

Every year, around 15-20 students from St. Christopher School, London visits Seva Mandir for a week and spend 2 days with the children at the camp. They come prepared with their study material and activity curriculum and do various learning activities with the children at the camp. The sessions taken by the St. Christopher students include Arts and Crafts, Music, Drama, basic English, conceptual mathematics etc. It's a great learning experience and fun event for the children at the camp.

4. Visit to Sajjangarh Botanical park:

In the month of February 2018, the children were taken to Sajjangarh Biological Park, where they got the chance to explore varieties of wild animals which they had only seen in the form of pictures in their books. They were amazed to see deer, bear, lion, leopard, tiger, turtle, porcupine, etc very close to them, while taking a stroll on the lanes of the biological park. After a morning filled with exploring these wild creatures, they were taken to Rajiv Gandhi Park in the afternoon, where they had their lunch and thereafter they enjoyed the lovely garden and play area at the park. Later in the evening, a discussion was done by the instructors with the children on what they had observed in the whole day. Followed by this, an audio of the story “Ranga siyar” was played for the children, after which they had a discussion on the story.



3: Activity centre

In the rural areas of Udaipur, the only option for formal schooling for the children is to go to government schools. But many of these schools are either understaffed or if there are teachers employed, they are often absent or not able to teach effectively due to time consuming administrative tasks and poor pedagogical methods. Consequently, many children are unable to comprehend basic texts even after attending school for 4 – 5 years.



With the support of ASHA for Education, Seva Mandir initiated the Activity center Programme in collaboration with government schools of Badgaon block. Activity centers are run to improve the educational condition in government schools and to help students understand their lessons through conventional teaching methods as well as activity-based teaching

methods.

The teachers of the activity centers also act as substitutes for the school teachers, as there are not enough teachers in these schools.

There are 4 activity centers running with Upper primary schools of Malaria, Selu, Maruwaas, and Kadechawaas villages in the Badgaon block of Udaipur.

Study on Activity center at Selu-Village

A small study was conducted in this reporting period to assess the impact of the Activity center at Selu village. This study involved FGDs with the community, currently enrolled children and the students who have passed from the school.

Activity Center	Teachers in Schools	Total Enrollment in School		Enrollment in Tuition Center	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Upper Primary School Selu	7	92	71	14	7

This activity center in Kadiya zone of Badgaon block was established in the village 10 years ago with the help of Seva Mandir to curb the challenges faced

by government school children in achieving their academic goals. Initially the school had only 3 government teachers employed for all the students which in turn demanded the need for more teachers to serve the school children. The school runs 1st to 8th standard and has an enrollment of 163 students, out of which 92 are boys and 71 are girls. Consequently, it was also noticed that the student teacher ratio was inappropriate, less number of teachers were not able to give attention as per the needs of the students. Therefore, an activity centre was established to overcome the lacunas observed.

Findings from the study:

It was found from the study that the instructor appointed by Seva Mandir for the activity centre teach mathematics to the students of 1st to 5th standard and also provide tuition classes to 1st to 8th standard students in their summer break from 7-10 in the morning. Through the FGD with 32 children, it was found that the teaching- learning method used by the instructor of the activity centre is very different from the methods used in the formal school settings which help in imparting knowledge in a creative way, also promoting “learning by doing method”, eg., counting the number of sticks or beads to learn addition, subtraction, etc.

For language development of the children, the instructor focuses on enhancing the reading, writing and learning capacity with the help of story-telling and use of worksheets for practices. When the children were asked about the need for the instructor at the activity centre, they manifested a positive response and agreed upon his need at the centre because of a number of reasons including that he belongs to the same village and it is easy to communicate to him regarding studies and other issues as well. As revealed by the students, he used a democratic approach to discipline the children which involved reasoning to everything imposed upon the children. This inculcated a better understanding towards what is acceptable and also the reason behind its acceptability.

When asked a few members of the community regarding their opinion about the education of their children at the school, they said that “Prem so jo padhate hai, khel khel me jo padhate hai”, this statement means that the teachers teach with love and are try to gauge the interest of the students through play way method. They also said that they need more teachers like the activity center instructor who teaches with a different approach. To conclude this study, it was found that we need to continue running this center, as apart from being a substitute teacher for the students, the students were very comfortable learning from him as he approaches different teaching methods which makes learning easier for the students.

Thank you, Asha for Education for supporting us in educating these children!