

Site Visit Report - April 2016

I visited Thulir after a year between April 6th - 10th 2016. A year is too long a period to keep track of the constant changes happening in Thulir. The transition from an Educational Resource Centre to a full-fledged Kindergarten is well underway. As a result, the physical infrastructure and the students visiting have considerable changes. The erstwhile classrooms have made way for residential facilities (for guests, staffs and volunteers) and the erstwhile residences have made way for class rooms. This is in accordance with the stipulations for school buildings as per the guidelines of Department of School Education, Govt. of Tamil Nadu.

The Kindergarten now caters to about 25 students in the age-group 4-6. Efforts are underway to register Thulir as a full fledged school as per the provisions under Right to Education. As a first step, Thulir has acquired about 3.2 acres of land on the outskirts of Sittlingi. The earlier acquisition of 2 acres in 2010 was deemed to be unusable for the purposes of the school, as it is located very close to the local Government School. The new land is located within 500m from the main road connecting Sittlingi and Thumbal on the route to Salem/Attur.

The students comprise of different backgrounds - children of Doctors and staff of Tribal Health Initiative, staffs of other associated agencies like SOFA, Porgai and TTI, and children of residents of villages of Sittlingi and other hamlets around it. Thulir has also recruited two more teachers in an effort to increase the student intake in 2016-17 and also enhance their credentials to secure the recognition for a school.

The typical daily routine of students would resemble close to the itinerary described below:

9:00 - Arrival; Some students arrive earlier

9:00 - 9:30 - Daily cleaning of the campus by students and teachers

9:30 - 10:00 - Prayer sessions which include songs, Thirukkural and some story telling

10:00 - 11:00 - First session of the day focused on academics

11:00 - 11:10 - Small break for daily snacks. Most items resemble the evening snacks served earlier

11:10 - 12:45 - Second session focused on academics.

1:00 - 2:00 - Lunch followed by some rest

2:00 - 3:00 - Crafts, music, drama and other activities.

3:00 - 3:30 - Gardening

3:30 - Departure

On Friday, the Children go for a walk in the nearby forest/farms to learn about plants, reptiles and others that they observe during the walk. Thulir has retained some of the activities like daily cleaning, gardening, forest walks which were prevalent during the days of resource centre.

The visit of students from the Government School has reduced due to the reasons mentioned in earlier reports. Occasionally, some students come during Saturdays for the books in the library or additional coaching from Anu. Recently, Thulir organised a sports day which attracted over 100 students. The Sports day was held in collaboration with the THI and the staff also participated in it. Some children continue to train with Senthil and Shaktivel for running events and they have participated in the Bengaluru Marathon in October 2015 and Bangalore Ultra in November 2015.

Thulir continues to be a learning and resource centre for students ignored or rejected by the Government School. Perumal and Mohan, who joined in 2014 were joined by three other students who have been refused admission to class 10 in the Government School. Thulir continues to provide them with training in life skills and vocational training (not supported directly by ASHA anymore).

Staff Update

Senthil, one of the oldest students, was undertaking administrative duties in Thulir until December 2015. He was subsequently deputed to Porgai and SOFA, units affiliated with THI, for the remainder of the year to help him get more work exposure.

Rajamma continued as teacher in the school and lives on the premises.

Ravi, recruited in 2014, continued during the year and has started living in the Thulir premises. Ravi also holds B.Ed qualification which is a necessity to apply for recognition.

Lakshmi, **Sasikala** and **Ambika** continued during the year. They are in Thulir since 2012. Efforts are underway to help them secure graduation through open university.

Thulir has recruited two more teachers from the neighbouring villages from April 2016 onwards. **Jayachitra**, who holds a Diploma in Education, and **Chintamani**, who

holds a B.Ed, were added to the teaching force and were earlier working in Government Schools.

Shaktivel started taking more administrative responsibilities and also manages the Kitchen. He was not supported by ASHA last year.

For more, one can always read their blog - <http://www.thulir.org/wp/blog/> and here are the links for the most recent posts:

1. January 2016 - <http://www.thulir.org/wp/2016/03/newsletter-january-2016/>
2. June 2015 - <http://www.thulir.org/wp/2015/06/photo-essay-recent-events-at-thulir/>

Realisation of Budget 2015-16

	Note	2015 - 16 Budget (Rs.)	2015 - 16 Actuals (Rs.)	2014 - 15 Actuals (Rs.)
Salaries	1	3,00,000	4,70,000	2,59,450
Nutrition Program	2	2,03,500	2,42,576	1,71,166
Resource person Expenses	3	50,000	22,150	68,141
Exposure Tour	4	10,000	13,732	40,005
Travel Expenses	5	25,000	18,916	21,382
Telephone and Communication		20,000	15,000	17,916
Vehicle Maintenance		25,000	17,529	18,091
Campus Maintenance	6	25,000	44,565	63,490
Teaching Materials		15,000	21,747	9,884
Equipment Maintenance		5,500	6,655	4,472
Bank Charges		1,000	3,816	200
Total		6,80,000	8,76,686	6,74,197

Notes:

1. List of Teachers

Name	Age	Education	Experience in Thulir	Total Experience
Ravi	26	BA, B. Ed.	2	3
Shaktivel	24	Basic Technology, Carpentry		
Ambika	23	Class 12	3	3
Lakshmi	23	Class 12	3	3
Jeyachitra	31	DTEd		
Sinthamani	29	BA, B. Ed.		
Rajammal	26	BA	5	5
Sasikala	27	Class 10	3	

2. Thulir also sources a portion of the Nutrition Budget from the parents. The parents are given a choice to contribute in Cash (maximum Rs. 5,000) or in produce from their farms or through work in projects related to Thulir. There are instances of waiver given to few of the parents due to difficult backgrounds.

3. Some of the resource persons were hosted by the hospital due to changes in accommodation in Thulir. A list of resource persons who visited Thulir during the year is updated in their Blog.

4. Expenses on exposure tours relates to runners participating in various running events.

5. Travel expenses relates to trips to Thiruvannamalai, Puvudham school and others. The trips have been less than forecasted mainly due to increased focus on acquiring lands.

6. The alterations in the campus to comply with the regulations has resulted in an increase in the campus maintenance.