

## **Asha for Education, Delaware Chapter – Meeting with Swami Vivekanand Vidyalaya, Lodhar**

**Organization:** Asha for Education, Delaware Chapter

**Project:** SVV Lodhar (blog: <http://svvlodhar.blogspot.com/p/gallery.html>)

**Type of Project:** School for underprivileged children in Kanpur

**Type of visit:** Virtual via Zoom

**Date:** September 22, 2021

**Time:** 10:30 PM EST, 8 AM IST, 2 hours

**Google drive link to recording:** Restricted access please email chapter for permission to view.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h\\_La68TV7OdcPK\\_WeJvVwNiF0Ig\\_WONb?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h_La68TV7OdcPK_WeJvVwNiF0Ig_WONb?usp=sharing)

### **Goals:**

- 1) Virtual site visit to SVV Lodhar, to learn more about their functioning.
- 2) Meeting with the school's teachers and management, understanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their students and their work.
- 3) Discussing the budget and need for resources.

### **Attendees:**

1. Lavanya Jakka, Asha Delaware Project Manager
2. Abhishek Iyer, Asha Delaware Mentor
3. Praneet Batchu, Asha Delaware Vice President
4. Sagar Doshi, Asha Delaware Volunteer
5. Vidhika Damani, Asha Delaware Secretary
6. Ms. Annapurna Dikshit Principal, Hindi and Sanskrit teacher
7. Mr. Uday Pratap Singh, Computer teacher, website and blog maintenance, has been with the school for 10 years
8. Ms. Radha Mishra, Younger classes, Hindi
9. Ms. Zubeida Khan, SST Classes for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>
10. Ms. Shukla, Art Classes
11. Mr. Sanjay, Science teacher 6-8
12. Mr. Pradeep, Maths teacher and Science Teacher
13. Mr. Chandrakumar, Maths, GK and Hindi
14. Mr. Avdesh, Hindi and Sanskrit
15. Mr. Manoj, Maths, GK and EVS
16. Music and Art Teachers
17. Madhav Ranganathan
18. Aditya Medury
19. Prabal Maiti



Photo 1: Picture of school building on the day of the meeting.



Screenshot 1: School building.

### **Current Situation and General Affairs:**

- 1) Students are not on campus because of Dengue spread. Some casualties have also been recorded; due to this, classes are online temporarily. However, for the most part, the school has shifted to in-person learning again.

- 2) Before starting classes, a revision session is held to cover any missed information. Other information is conveyed through Whatsapp.
- 3) Exam conduction: One class at a time, students were masked and socially distanced, exams were take-home. Time slots for each class (collection of papers). Questions were based on concepts and less rote learning, especially for higher classes.
- 4) Intermittent classes were held to cover the syllabus.

#### **Inputs from teachers:**

- 1) Teachers would also travel from camp to camp in groups so that they could teach students who could not come to school. In addition to the students, their families also would attend and learn from the classes.
- 2) The teachers focus on the communication skills and strengths of the students. They motivate them to participate in debates, essay writing, recitation, and other district- and state-level competitions. The students are very excited to come back to school in-person; it runs from 8:30 AM-1 PM. In case of camps and activities, the students stay back at school till 5PM. The atmosphere is that of a family. Students are very attached to their teachers and enjoy learning at the school.
- 3) How do the parents feel? – Their consent was taken before students returned to school (submitted a consent form). Most students returned post the pandemic.
- 4) If students are absent, teachers contact their family. Absenteeism due to health, sometimes due to high demand of labour in peak farming season.



Screenshot 2: Teachers gathered in science lab during the virtual visit call.

**Student Welfare and Facilities:**

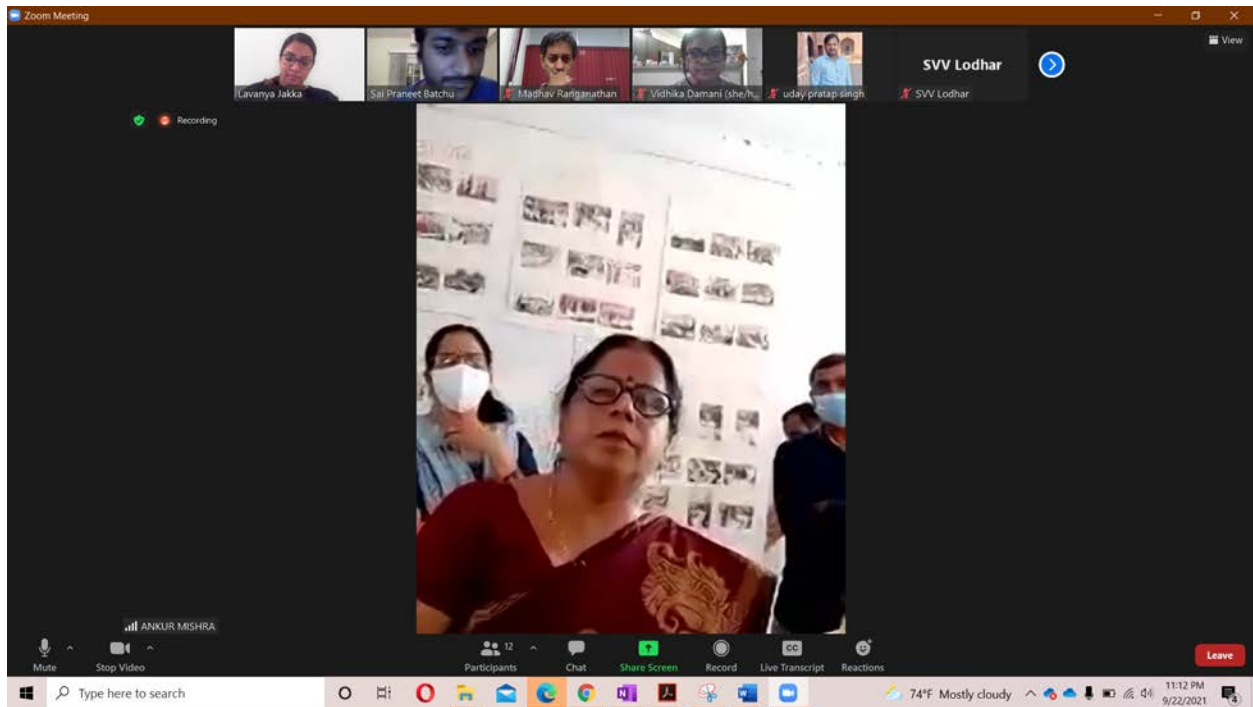
- 1) Students sanitation – parents like to send their children to school well dressed and clean. Recently, Asha donated t-shirts to the students and they were very happy to be dressed in the same as other school-going children.
- 2) Nutrition supplements – Chana, moong, peanuts at least once a day. Twice a week at least – vegetables, jaggery, fruits. They encourage bringing a lunchbox from home and nutrient supplements (listed above) are distributed during lunch. Drinking water – donated by good Samaritans locally in the area.
- 3) Science lab – Equipped with models made by the students. Several working models – a mosquito repellent machine, working model of a vacuum cleaner, foot operated sanitizing machine, 3D models of human anatomy.



Photo 2: Science lab.

- 4) Photowall – highlights cultural programmes, sports, debate, dance, essay writing, mehendi and rangoli competitions – SVV Lodhar participates and the students fare very well. Swami Vivekanand Vidyalaya is becoming popular for winning awards in cultural activities!



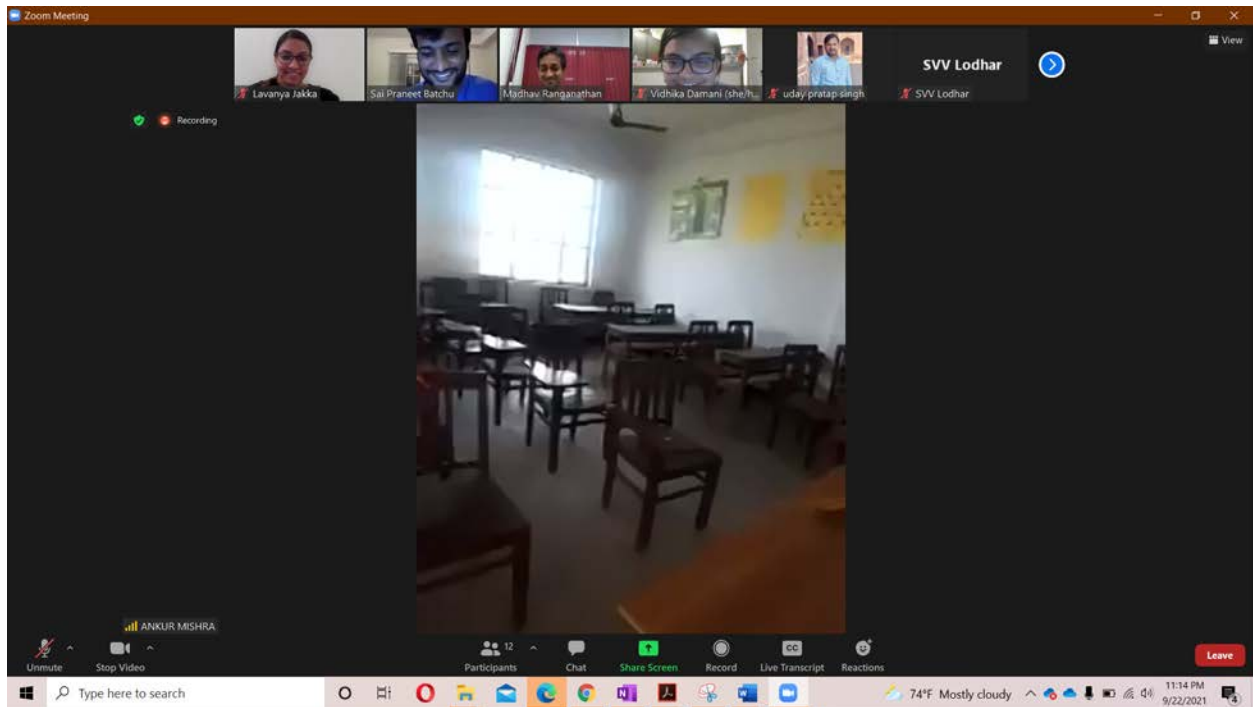


Screenshot 3: Photo wall in corridor. Principal Ms. Annapurna Dikshit in the picture with other teachers during walk through the school.

- 5) 15<sup>th</sup> August celebrations are hosted in the village by the school.
- 6) Classrooms: Equipped with windows, black boards, maps of India and the world. Projects done by the students are placed on the walls. Overall, neat and spacious classroom atmosphere, comfortable for the children, good ventilation and natural light



Photo 3: Classroom



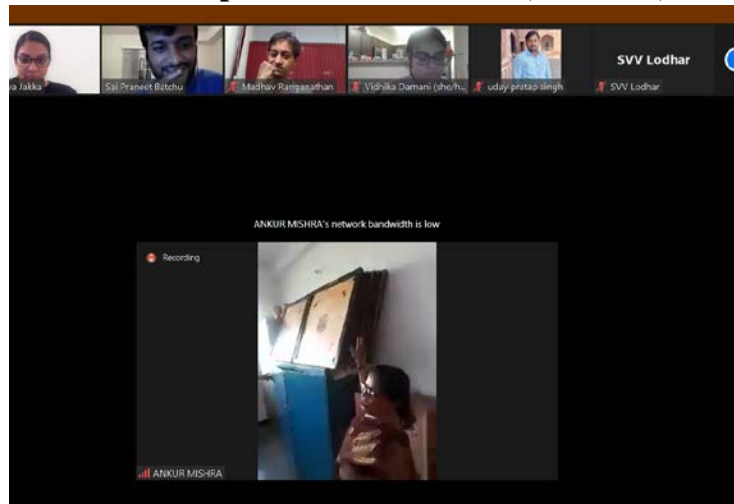
Screenshot 4: Classroom with project charts done by students displayed on the wall.

- 7) Sports Room – Carrom boards, board games, basketball net
- 8) Arts room, also for younger classes- the 8<sup>th</sup> period is different for each class and involves arts, crafts, sports, music.

**Screenshot 5: Art by students with teachers guidance.**



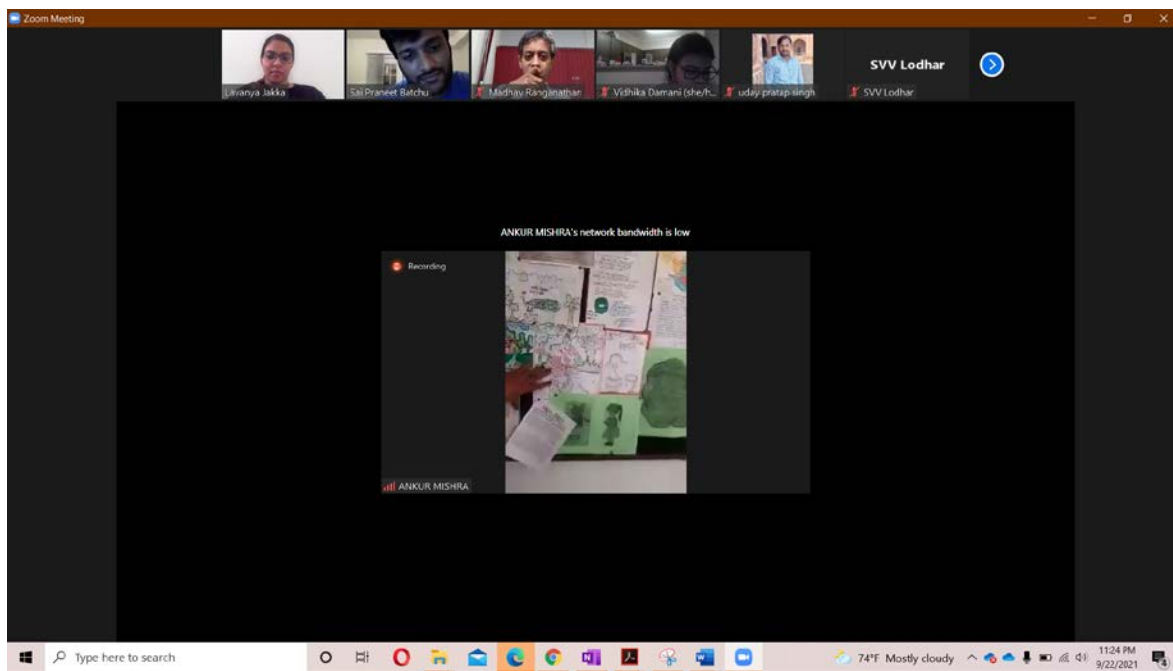
**Screenshot 6: Sports room with Chess, carroms, etc.**



- 9) Biweekly magazines – prepared completely by the students and finally edited by the teachers. The magazine is uploaded on the blog, distributed to the children and their families



Photo 4: Notice board organized and maintained by students with their art work and writing.



Screenshot 7: Notice board with students work and attached biweekly magazine.



- 10) Photos of trips – Agra, Taj Mahal, Classes 1-5: In Kanpur. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade onwards: out of Kanpur: Agra, Banaras, Mathura, Lucknow, Allahabad etc – they travel by bus with the teachers. Family members are also excited about the students’ trips, especially to see photos and souvenirs.



Screenshot 8: One of the trip pictures displayed on the photo board.

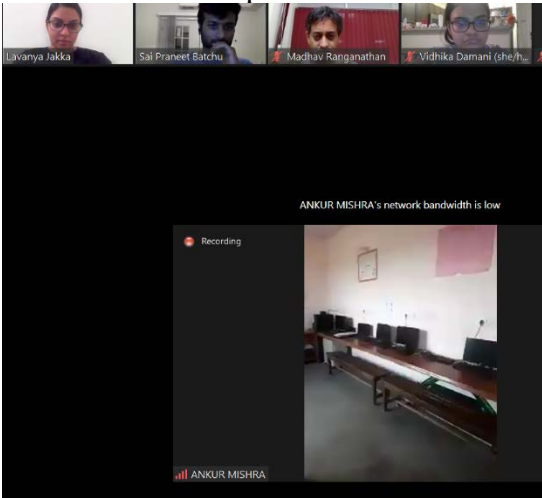
- 11) Computer lab – Big screen for small children. Computers, laptops and tablets – equipped with LAN – During COVID, they used Zoom and Google Meet extensively. A big challenge was explaining to students how to get access to the internet, how to give them access to phones and computers.



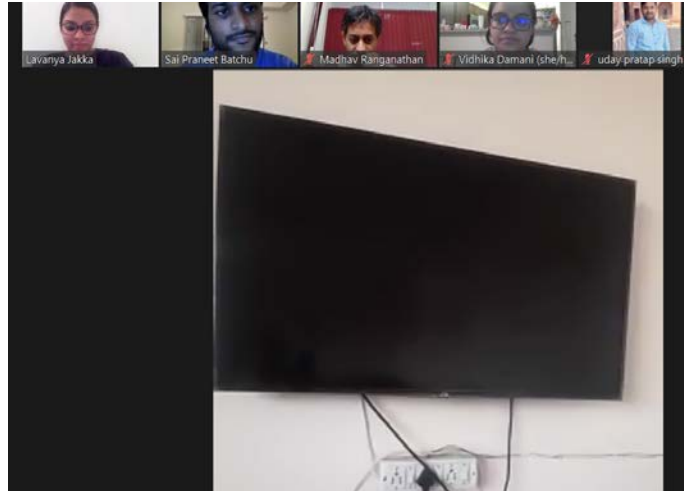
Photo 5: Computer lab



Screenshot 9: Computer lab.



Screenshot 10: Big screen in computer lab used for smaller kids.



- 12) Playground for the children – Khokho, kabaddi, badminton, football, cricket
- 13) School Library – books for several age groups. Several subjects – Science, SST, GK, encyclopedias, picture and story books for younger children



Screenshot 11: One of the bookshelves in the library.

- 14) The students can even issue books for themselves and their family members at the nominal fee of Rs. 5. The library is assigned to two teachers for a duration of 3 years. Teachers divide the responsibilities. They have received books as donation from Amazon

- 15) Musical instruments in the music room.
- 16) The school is also equipped with good and clean washrooms, separate for boys and girls. And cameras for safety.
- 17) Bal Sabah – Students government, handled by students. Voting knowledge, handling responsibility and punishments etc. Grades 6-7 Vice President, Grades 7-8 President
- 18) Morning assembly: Prayer, national anthem, PT, shloka and poem reciting – to create public speaking skills
- 19) Science Mela – Annual – 700-1000 people visit, Cultural Mela for dance and music events, art competitions.

### Conclusions:

- 1) The teachers felt motivated and encouraged after speaking to Team Asha. As for Team Asha, we're humbled and inspired to see how resourceful and entrepreneurial the teachers are and commend their efforts to educate the children from the villages in their vicinity.
- 2) We hope to keep in touch with the teachers, via virtual visits, potentially once in 3 months.
- 3) Team Asha is discussing fund disbursal and planning to disburse roughly \$11,000 to SVV Lodhar.



Photo 6: School teachers on the day of virtual visit.