

Dec 15, 2007

Visit Report to Schools of Sarvodaya Parivar Trust at Pindval & Khadki Centers By Jyoti & Tushar Shah on Dec 10 & 11, 2007.



Repaired class rooms at Pindval School.

Asha Silicone Valley contributed Rs 1 million for repair work.

The courtyard has been redesigned in harmony with the rural setting of Pindval.

1. Executive Summary:

1.1 Pindval School has a good facelift, after the walls of the old buildings had cracked. Asha Silicone Valley has supported the repair project. The new building has larger class rooms, with skylight and several windows. They are well lighted & airy. Still rural in their character & made on a low budget, the class rooms are very pleasant places to study. The new building was designed by Aparnaben of KEDI, an architect, free of cost.

1.2 Khadki is now connected to the electrical grid!! That is a huge step forward. However, the electricity is available only for a very few hours a day. But the

- people of Khadaki are elated & look forward to the days when electricity will be available for few more hours.
- 1.3 BSNL has laid a telephone cable up to Pindval, though connection will take some time. This would give connectivity to even Internet.
 - 1.4 A teacher from KEDI is visiting Pindval once a week to teach English. Fifth standard students from Khadki also travel to Pindval to attend his classes. He seems to be making a good impact.
 - 1.5 Admissions to Pindval School have been increased to 47 students in First standard from normal 30-32.
 - 1.6 Both Pindval & Khadki are not able to recruit enough girl students. Although the value of education is very much appreciated by the Adivasi families, boys are given preference. If there are younger siblings or goats to be taken care of, girls are just not sent to the school!
 - 1.7 Khadki is planning to expand its activities of Zero Class. It has increased its scope to coach primary school students up to 5th standard in distant villages, as the quality of teaching in Government run schools is extremely poor or non-existent.
 - 1.8 Students appeared better groomed & upbeat at both centers. Their learning of maths was impressive. Third grade students did mental sums of adding & subtracting two digit numbers up to 20. We gave two digit addition & subtraction written problems to fourth grade students. 28 out of 30 students got them right.
2. Visit: Jyoti & I started driving early morning from Thane, a suburb of Mumbai. It took us about 3.5 hours to reach Dharampur. We were surprised to see newly painted signs of “Wilson Hill” leading to Pindval. Gujarat Government has decided to develop Wilson Hill, just a couple of miles from Pindval, as a new “Hill Station”. The one lane road (for two way traffic!) is fully paved up to Pindval. It is perhaps even more dangerous to drive now as the traffic moves at a higher speed, even on the hairpin curves. It is shocking to see a Bus barreling down the steep slope on the same lane on which you are driving up. But we reached safely to the cool environs of Pindval.
 3. A pleasant surprise awaited us at the Pindval School. The new classrooms are larger, well lighted & well ventilated. SPT had to tear down many more walls as they had cracked. Aparnaben of KEDI designed a new cluster of classrooms, while retaining the rural settings of Pindval. Kantibhai, a minimalist, did to want to tear down the part of the structure that was not failing in order to reduce costs. The final result is still very pleasing but cost more than the initial budget of Rs 1 million (\$25K). Some more donors came forward & the construction is

completed. Asha Silicon Valley chapter will be pleased to see the result of their contribution of Rs 0.986 Million.

4. Pindval has admitted 47 students instead of normal 30 this year in Std 1. Some are local students, who stay at their home.
5. SPT is debating internally whether they should have growth in normal education system & the role they should play. They started the school in Pindval when there were no schools in the area. Government has now started many new primary schools among clusters of villages. The responsibility of providing basic education rightly belongs to Government & not to NGO's like SPT. However, it is a sad reality that most Government schools do not provide any education. Government teachers have to bribe officials to get the job. They rarely come to schools in these remote areas as they do not like to live in isolated areas, they have no inclination to teach & often are not trained to teach. It is a business. They pay officials to protect them for not attending the school. Consequently, students passing 5th standard often can not even write their names. They have low self esteem & rarely talk.

As the number of children wanting to get into schools is increasing at a high rate, NGO's like SPT can not cope up with the load.

Khadki has decided to think out of the box & provide only those services that are needed by a given community. They have started coaching the students after they finish classes at Government schools. In several villages, the school teachers themselves request Khadki's teachers' help.

6. In the year 2006-07, 194 students studied at Pindval for STD 1 to 7. There were 74 girls & 120 boys. They stay at the school & all their expenses, including lodging, boarding, books, uniforms & medical are paid by the school. There are 79 girls & 136 boys totaling 215 students at present, for the year 2007-08.
7. 21 students who passed 7th standard, from SPT Pindval, have joined secondary schools. Students participated in open exams for Hindi, exams on Gandhiji's life & work by Gujarat Vidyapith as also on Swami Vivekanand's life as conducted by Ramakrishna Seva Committee. SPT children have consistently fared better than other students from the district. One student topped the district.
8. Pindval & Khadki center schools are very clean & neat. All cleaning is done by the students themselves, as a part of their training.



The new classrooms are larger & have skylights.
The platform at the far end serves as the stage for kids to perform songs & dance.

9. New class rooms are larger, brighter due to Skylights & airy due to increase in windows. SPT have done a very good job of upgrading the school during repairs.
10. An experienced teacher from KEDI has started coming to Pindval to teach English for one day /week. He has interesting theory about how to teach such students who have no other exposure to English. To ensure correct pronunciations, tapes are prepared by Jayantibhai. During the week in his absence, students listen to the tapes & speak or sing along with tapes.
11. We tested Std 5 students, their first year of learning English, whether they understood the meanings of various words. They could translate the names of objects, animals etc whose pictures they could see. However, they did not understand the personal trait like “Lazy”, as it could not be visualized. They sang nursery rhymes quite well.
12. The students are good at doing maths. Third grade students were learning fractions. They could also do mental additions & subtractions of two digit numbers up to 20.
13. We visited sixth grade class which was doing an experiment of how a candle extinguishes if oxygen supply is cut out. They told us that CO₂ makes clear lime water milky. We asked how do we get rains? One boy explained to us the cycle of evaporation, cloud formation, condensation of moisture & rain. We were impressed by the logical sequence that the student presented.

14. The children have new uniforms. Three tailors are stationed at the school to stitch Uniform for every Child. Some boys are balance & they will get their Uniforms soon. The students appeared much better groomed.

Even new recruits in Std 1 were well groomed. Girls in Std 5 groom the hair of Std 1 girls & help them keep them clean & Neat.

Staying like a family comes natural to the students. Their parents often go away on seasonal work as migrant workers. The siblings & the village take care of kids left behind.

15. The kids also looked better nourished than last year. We had given them a feedback last year that children are getting so little milk. They are giving more milk this year. We had also suggested that they give more pulses as protein intake appeared low. They say that they have implemented that suggestion. It needs to be verified.
16. Ganeshbhai, the Principal, says that genetically, adivasis are small stature people. May be it gave them evolutionary competitive advantage in the era when they lived off jungle products. However, we suggested more sports & better nutrition.
17. Most of the children do not have any footwear. Ganeshbhai informs that they prefer bare foot. May be it is for budgetary reasons that school does not give any shoes.

SPT is run on the principles of minimizing the personal needs. That is important as when kids go home, they have very little, often not even two meals. However, SPT will have to find a balance & give more facilities that would leverage students' learning abilities.

18. Children study while sitting on the floor. They did not have any desk to facilitate writing. One well-wisher has given low writing desks for one class. If that is accepted by kids, they may buy more desks.
19. Students also use only slate & chalk pen to write. May be because notebooks are expensive.
20. We were concerned about fewer girls joining the school this year. May be SPT will have to modify their recruitment policies & give preferential treatment to girls. As demand for admission to SPT is very high, almost 8 to 10 applications for one seat, SPT has a criteria that only one child per family can be admitted. Suppose a family has an infant son & a school age daughter. The family would send the daughter to Government school to keep open the opportunity for the son

to join SPT school when he grows up. Education of girls is not considered as important as that of boys by these families.

On the other hand, if SPT relaxes this policy, some families would not have any child in SPT School. That would be viewed as very unfair by the community. SPT does not have an easy solution.

21. Overall, we were very happy to see the up-gradation of school facilities, upbeat spirit of the students & the type of education they are receiving at Pindval.

KHADKI Center of SPT.



Sujataben & Jyoti at Khadki School.

Khadki has become a vibrant center for education & rural development under Sujataben's leadership. She has a wonderful ability to get all villagers involved in developmental work.

1. Democracy in India has an advantage. Just before the election, politicians suddenly remember the campaign promises they had made five years back & rush to fulfill the promises, at least in name.
2. Khadaki is now connected to the Electric Grid. Further, a contract has been given to build a paved road up to Khadaki.
3. It is another matter that electricity flows up to Khadaki only once in a while. But by the time next election comes after five years, the villagers hope that there will be also continuous power in the cable.
4. Khadaki is abuzz with all sorts of activities.
5. Sujataben is organizing education as per the need of the community. To understand the approach, we have to think out of the Box, completely different from the highly structured education boards in USA.
6. Let us take the example of Khadaki. It has a Government school up to Std 5 with two rooms & two teachers, at least in name. One teacher has been transferred away for more than a year & is not replaced. The second teacher was away most of the year on maternity leave & was not substituted. Now, the teacher has returned with the child, but she has no place to stay. So, she occupies one room in the school. That leaves over 137 students (52 from Khadaki + 85 from surrounding villages & staying at SPT) from Std 1 to Std 5, with only one small class room, one teacher & no place to stay for students from other villages.

Government teacher & Sujataben decide to collaborate. They combine 85 students from surrounding who villages live at SPT's Khadaki center & 52 students from Khadaki village. Students for only one Std study at Government school. Classes for balance four Stds for all other students are conducted at SPT by SPT's teachers. If Government teacher falls sick, SPT's teacher, along with her flock, marches to the Government school & she teaches students for two classes in one room.

SPT had started traditional school four years back. However, the formal approval letter has not come, probably waiting for the bribes to be paid, which SPT will not pay. The problem has been solved in a practical way. All students are registered at Government school on paper & can get official certificate of having studied at Government school.

Meanwhile, all the kids are getting good education, which is the main purpose anyway.

7. Zero Classes have also expanded their scope. As explained earlier, Government schools do not teach much. The villagers requested SPT's help. Even Government

teachers in some villages, who are inadequately prepared, offered the use of their class rooms for Zero class. Now SPT's teachers teach not only pre-school children, but also coach older children who have not learnt much at Government School.

8. Nine teachers have been recruited for Zero class now. We met the senior teacher Manharbhai, who travels to supervise the Quality of teaching & gives guidance to teachers spread out in villages. We saw his log book for monitoring activities & implementation of his suggestions.
9. Sujataben is thinking that in addition to the school up to 7th std to be run at Khadaki, they will take up tutoring the kids in other villages to bring them on par with the curriculum.
10. Last year, 42 boys & 25 girls, a total of 67 studied at Khadaki center for Std 1 to 4. This year, Std 5 has been started. Students have increased to 85.
11. SPT Khadaki is being considered as a model center for case study about rural education & rural development. Two grad students are doing their studies at Khadaki. One German student came to Khadaki to study for a couple of days. She stayed on for six weeks, mostly living with an Adivasi family, as arranged by Sujataben.
12. 62 Grad students from Kumarappa School for Social Work were camping at Khadaki for two weeks.
13. SPT, along with KEDI & other NGO's in the area are arranging a children's camp for a week in December. Students from different schools & villages will stay together, will have education workshops, exchange ideas of effective methods of teaching & have fun.
14. The only sad thing about SPT is that everyone has accepted, what they think is the cultural reality that fewer Girls will be sent to the schools by the Adivasi families. We wish that the mindset & tradition can be changed. SPT have promised to make efforts to recruit more girls.

Recommendations:

1. Asha to continue to Support Sarvodaya Parivar Trust as below after adjusting for increase in number of students & adjusting 15% for lower forex rate of US\$:
 - 1.1 School at Pindval: $\$8000 \times (215/194) \times 1.15 =$ \$10,200/ yr
 - 1.2 School at Khadaki: $\$4000 \times (85/67) \times 1.15 =$ \$5,800/ yr
 - 1.3 Zero Class by Khadaki : $\$2000 \times (1.1) \times 1.15 =$ \$2500/yr

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Encl :

Other activities by SPT for Community development.

Expenses at SPT Schools for the year 2006-2007



Zero Class students at Khadki.

These kids are having a good time learning basic stuff. The atmosphere is cheerful & happy. The kids showed off songs they had learnt. Had it not been for the Zero Class initiative by Khadki center, supported by Asha, these kids would have been wandering around, with their parents away working as day laborers.



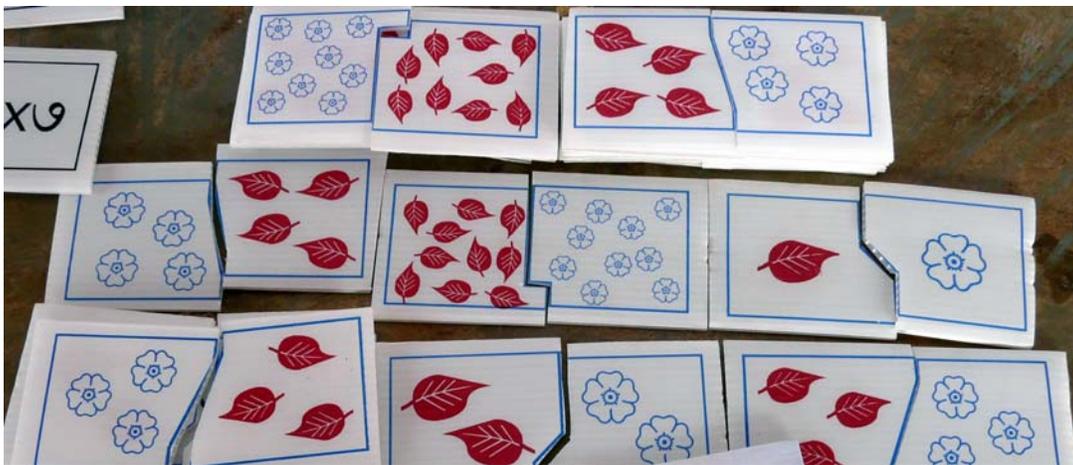
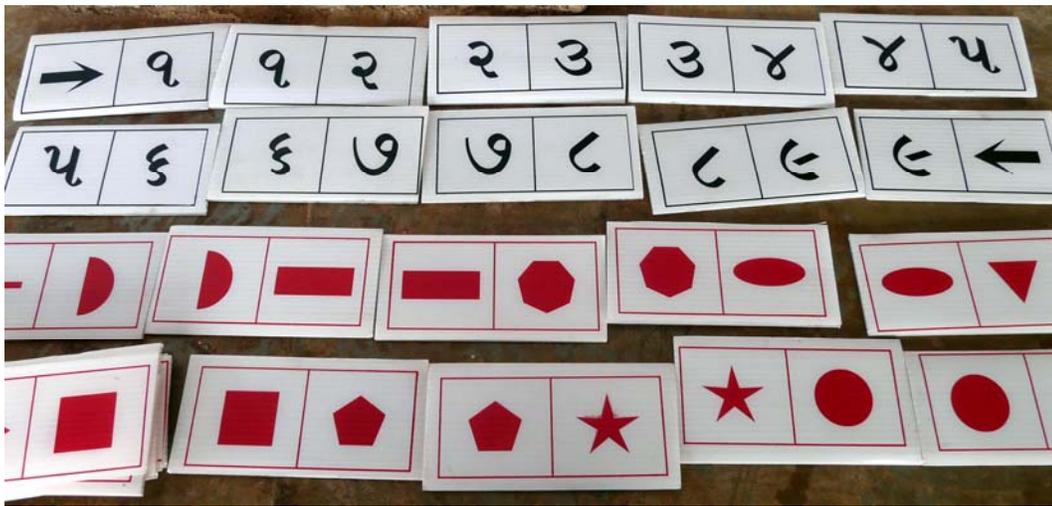
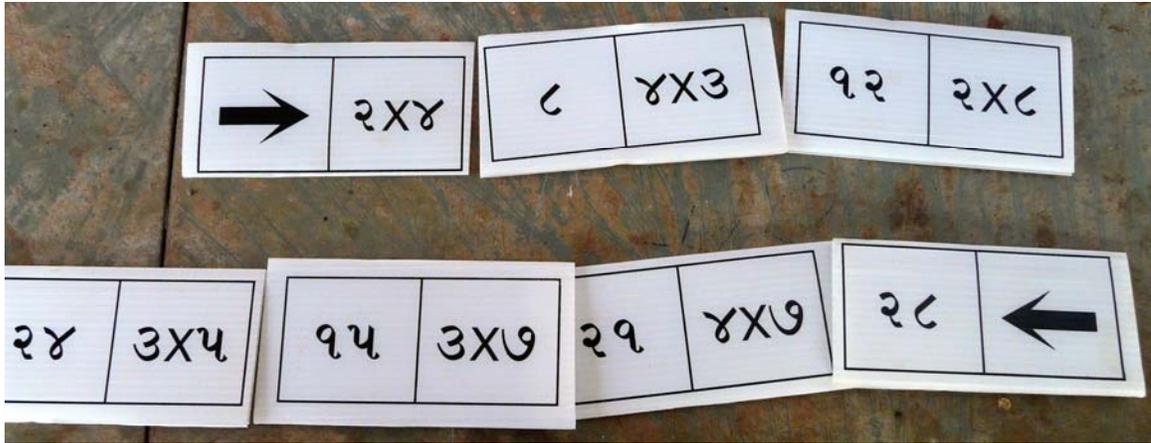
Thank You Asha for the support.
Students at Khadki School.

We had good interaction with students in large & small groups. Although initially shy, kids opened up later.

Please see Photo Album at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/tusharshah/VisitReportByJyotiTusharShahToSarvodayParivarTrustSSchoolsAtPindvalKhadaki/photo#5145163647878641202>

More Pics below:



Flash Cards made by SPT & KEDI.

The kids pick out the cards from a large stack & match the shapes or numbers. There are several types of flash cards. Some of them tricky like pick the odd one out of four animals: One was carnivorous, others were herbivorous.

These cards have been also distributed to other schools by SPT & KEDI.

Expenses at Sarvodaya Parivar Schools

April 1, 2006 to Mar 31, 2007.

	Pindval	Khadaki
1 Salaries	344,811	194,896
2 Groceries & Grains	404,565	195,612
3 Vegetables	40,136	20,475
4 Milk	89,378	36,984
5 Fuel	111,506	39,705
6 Kitchen appliances	12,721	12,118
7 Educational materials	10,708	16,653
8 Uniforms	18,477	11,583
9 Hostel Expenses	8,131	13,590
10 Bus Fare etc	3,558	22,164
11 Excursions: Students		7,550
12 Vehicle: Bike		9,503
13 Wages for Workers		9,980
14 Miscellaneous	2,904	11,041
Total	1,046,895	601,854

Notes

- 1 Total expense at SPT for repairs of buildings, construction, paint etc was Rs 2,454,276. Break-up for School building repairs was not readily available.
Kantibhai will send later the expenses on school building repair at Pindval.
- 2 The above expenses are extracted by SPT out of books of accounts.

Other activities of Community Development & Service by
Sarvodaya Parivar Trust

SPT also carries out several activities to support the community. Following is a Brief:

1. SPT has identified poorest of the poor, who do not have enough to eat. Grains are given at a subsidized rate of Rs 3.50 / Kg against the average purchase price of Rs. 8.45/ Kg. Last year, 541,340 Kg of grains were distributed.
2. Many Adivasi families do not have a roof over their heads. Over 26 years, SPT has given roof tiles at subsidized rates. This year 500 families were supported, bringing the total to over 28,000 families.
3. SPT runs primary health clinics at Pindval, Khadaki & six other distant villages. 40,024 patients were served this year with medicines given free of cost. 10,000 Vitamin A capsules were given free of cost to combat night blindness.
4. SPT runs Khadi center to create job opportunities for local people. This year 1,614 Kg of cotton was spun, generating wages of over Rs 1 Lakh. 14,515 Sqm of Khadi was woven at the Pindval center. Khadi generated sales of over Rs . 2.1 Millions, of which, sales of Rs 1.5 Million was to the local villagers.
5. Nursery at Khadaki grew 25,000 saplings for fruit bearing trees & 20, 000 saplings for jungle trees. The saplings were distributed to villagers for planting around their homes & community property. Eight women from Khadaki village work at the nursery.
6. 5,200 saplings of Mango were sold to villagers at half the cost.
7. To encourage growing of protein rich Pulses as the second crop, 1350 Kg of good seeds were sold at half the cost.
8. Sri Sri Ravishankar's Art of Living Volunteers work with SPT for water management projects. They collaborated for digging five wells for villages. SPT supplies technical advice, bricks, cement & masons. Art of Living volunteers organize villagers for Shram Daan, or donation of labour.
9. Due to heavy rains & slopes of the hills, heavy soil erosion takes place. The erosion has accelerated in last couple of decades as the trees in the once lush green hills were illegally cut down. Stone barriers are built in the farms & on steep slopes so that soil accumulates. SPT gives technical advice, supervises the

work plus gives 1 kg of grains for 10 cu ft of earth work done by the villagers. 160,000 KG of grain was distributed as grain for work. Erosion on about 3000 acres of farms was prevented.

10. SPT helps villages build Check dams for water harvesting, water table recharging & to prevent soil erosion. Nine earth & stone check dams were built for 5 villages this year. SPT gives guidance & gives grain for earth work. 37 check dams built in previous years were repaired.
11. It is amazing how much is being done by Sarvodaya Parivar Trust for the Adivasis, without expecting anything in return. Due to their self-less service of over 4 decades, they are deeply respected and are able to organize collaboration & cooperation from other NGO's and all the Local people.

Jyoti & Tushar Shah

