

Sumavanam Site visit reports

Volunteer: Ms. Lakshmi Sreenivasan (Date: 2012)

I visited Sumavanam school last year when I went to India. Here is short synopsis. I arrived there late afternoon. The children were getting ready for their PM milk. The milk is donated from the nearby milk farm. Milk is then filtered boiled and then given to each child. The left over milk is made into yogurt, it is given to the children the next day at lunch. Even though these children come from nearby villages where there are milk giving cows, they don't receive any milk at home. Most of the milk is sold outside for cash. After that the children play and around 5 PM they head home. Since I arrived late in the afternoon it was close to the time to go home. The next morning children arrive quite early, some come around 6:30 AM. School starts around 8 AM with assembly outside and then singing songs in Telugu, Hindi and other languages. For example, Rabindranath Tagore's songs are also taught. Mornings are spent in math and science.

The class room is divided into age groups. On one side of the room it is the younger ones and a teacher is assigned to teach the subjects. It is amazing to see the students are so well focused and disciplined. Narasimhan teaches the older children their math and science. There is a brief recess in the middle of the day and the children receive a snack. Usually it is eggs and bananas. As the food prices have sky rocketed it is becoming increasingly difficult to give eggs every day. This where your funding increase helps, besides the teacher's salary. Then 12 to1 it is lunch time and a little bit of a play time. In the afternoon it is languages such as English and Telugu and history classes. The children are dismissed for the around 4:30 or five. I can't remember the exact time. Some days they also do craft projects and simple science experiments. I enjoyed every bit of my stay there. It is so nice to see these children who have so little are so happy and have such eagerness to learn. Hopefully my next trip I could spend more days and volunteer.

Volunteer: Giri Kolanupaka (Date: May 2013)

While visiting Timbaktu Collective in Anantapur and on the way back, along with Purnachander Rao of NICE (Needy Illiterate Children Education), we visited Sumavanam. This is located in a remote village, near Madanapalli and very close to borders of AP and Karnataka. There was no good mobile phone signals, some times it was under roaming and sometimes it was local if it gets connected.

We met Mr. Narsimhan and his wife. They are the ones who run the school there in about 1 to 2 acres land that they own. The school is a separate thatched roof house with a big hall that can accommodate about 35 to 40 students. In fact the

time we went there were already few children in their class. I did ask them few questions and they seem to be very responsive compared to the children from normal and formal school. This school is based on informal education and children learn to explore on their own and they will be asked to do several tasks like painting, making toys etc and as part of that they learn.

There was an issue locally with government and this school as the school syllabus was different they were not considering this school as a recognized one (I do not remember if this is exactly the issue), but they were trying to get this resolved by talks with government and others there. The parents since are also not literates, they are not keen on getting their children educated. It is very tough for these couple to get children's parents to convince to make them come to school. The children are all from local tribe community.

Overall I felt that the site visit was a good one and this school is very good in terms of the kind of education provided and the efforts, the organizers are putting in, are definitely commendable.

Some of the pics

are: <https://plus.google.com/photos/118399438370528747211/albums/5770963361814846161?banner=pwa> (the first 10 pics except the first one).