

# Ravi Aluganti Fellowship Site Visit Report

---

Srinivas Akula, February 2010

Ravi Aluganti is an Asha fellow being supported by Asha Seattle since 2001. He works with children of various government schools in Madanapalle mandal of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. Most of these government schools consist of 1-2 rooms with 1-2 teachers each. He also runs a mobile library for the children of these schools.

I reached Madanapalle on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> around 2:00 PM. Both Ravi and I didn't realize (while planning my trip) that a yearly local fair/festival was scheduled for Feb 1<sup>st</sup> and Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>. Majority of the schools that he visits fall within this area. Though it is not an official state holiday, the chances of schools functioning during this time was bleak. We tried our luck by visiting 3 schools but as anticipated, none of them were open.

Ravi recently started working with a very remote school (Category 4<sup>1</sup>) which was in a different area and we made plans to visit this new school the next day. Ravi uses his motor bike to travel to this school as the place is not accessible through van that Ravi uses for mobile library.

After about an hour's journey on his bike, we reached the school which was located in a very small mountain village. The school is upper-primary (till Class VII) and has 2 teachers but we had only 1 teacher present on that day. Later, Ravi told me that this being a remote location it is pretty common that only 1 teacher shows up on any given day. Luckily, he has an education facilitator (that Asha supports) working in this school and is from the same village.

Ravi started working with Classes 3-5 to complete the exercise for teaching "*geometrical shapes*" that he had started during his previous visit to the school. He was using 2-D and 3-D shapes made out of paper to carry out this exercise. He started by reviewing the work he did (2-D shapes) in the last session. He then divided the group into two groups – one comprising of the children from classes 3-4 and the other comprising of children from class 5. He asked the younger group to draw pictures using the 2-D shapes. He gave an example by drawing a stick figure. He restated that they should draw what they feel like and not copy the picture he drew but many were happy to do just that 😊. With the class V children he continued further to talk about 3-D shapes using the paper blocks.

During my stay, I also had some discussions around the future direction. Though our initial idea was to start a local resource center/school, it never took off due to multiple reasons – lack of funding from Asha Seattle and lack of bandwidth for Ravi. There was some progress however in 2009 when Om Prakash foundation and another individual donor expressed interest in funding the construction of a resource center (not the school). Their motivation was to put to use the books that were donated by Om

---

<sup>1</sup> Government schools are categorized based on the accessibility to the location where the school is situated – Category 1 being the schools in an urban setting where as Category 4 being the schools which are located in remote location that does not have *pakka* road access.

Prakash foundation. Ravi's proposal was to build another floor on top of his house and cater to the children closer to the Madanapalle town. During our conversation, it became clear that though there was value in doing this work, it was not a step towards the longer term direction Ravi wants to pursue. On the contrary, it would further tie up Ravi's bandwidth and limit his ability to pursue his longer term plan. Instead, an incremental step would be to find a place where Ravi would want to establish the resource center/school, start with library and slowly build the resource center/school.

We decided to discuss this further with other stakeholders – Om Prakash Foundation & Shekar Subramaniam (individual donor) who was also planning to attend the Learning Network conference in Timbaktu that both Ravi & I were headed to.

Overall, I still feel there is value in continuing the current program from Asha's perspective for couple of reasons:

- Children from the government schools still dearly look forward to his visits, and also for the books that he loans them out.
- Ravi is a great resource that other Asha projects can benefit from. For example, he was planning to visit Parijat Academy in Guwahati & Project WHY in Delhi in March to conduct training on Activity based learning (ABL) techniques.

But the only way to unlock his full potential is to establish a resource center/school that lets him do full-time what he is best at – teach & train. This is in line with his personal aspirations and remains the future direction for this project.