

Project Build – Pasumai Trust
Site Visit Report – January 2009

Site visit – Pasumai Trust Educational centers, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu

Date of visit: January 23, 2009

Asha volunteer: Girish Ramaswamy, Birmingham chapter, Asha for Education,

Volunteer from project: K. Murthy Nivethy, founder of Pasumai Trust

On the morning of January 23rd, I reached Puduchatiram, a village in Thiruvallur district at around 10.45 am and then visited a few brick kilns, saw the places where educational centers were conducted last year and then finally made a visit to the Pasumai Trust office. Mr. K. Murthy, founder of Pasumai Trust accompanied me during the entire visit.

Pasumai Trust was running 6 educational centers a couple of years back, but had to reduce it to 3 centers last year due to lack of funds. Children from around 7 brick kilns were receiving non-formal education at these centers. The trust had employed 2 animators/teachers Ms. Dhanalaxmi & Ms. Arrokiyamary to teach the kids at these educational centers. Back in 2002, when Pasumai trust was initiated, few animators were taken to places such as Rishi Valley & recently to Isaiambalam, Auroville to learn teaching methods for such rural kids.

We visited a few surrounding brick kilns and found kids working at the site. Usually there are around 75 families at each brick kiln with bigger ones employing as much as 150 families. The workers migrate to such areas from the months of January through June and then travel back to their native villages and work in agricultural fields during the monsoon season. Continuity of the education of their children and increasing dropouts are the biggest concerns in such a scenario.

We then visit the nearby Government School in Puduchatiram. On our way to the school, we met one of the animators Ms. Dhanalakshmi who accepted that she would be glad to start teaching the children if the educational centers start to function again. At the school we found the headmaster with around 30 children in a classroom. The school uses Activity Based Learning (<http://www.ssa.tn.nic.in/CurrActivities-A.htm>) approach which has been recently introduced by the Tamil Nadu Government and has supplied a tremendous amount of material such as picture cards, mathematics with beads etc for all subjects. In this system, children from grades 1 through 5 are pooled in a class and perform various learning activities through a ladder system for each subject. As they finish the activities, they climb up the ladder and as they finish the ladder, they proceed to

the next grade in that subject. ABL is being used in all government schools in Tamil Nadu.

Pasumai Trust currently is taking to nearby government schools and is trying to enroll the children of brick kiln workers in these schools. The main objective of this proposal would be to enroll the children in 2 schools, one near the brick kilns and other in their native village so that continuity in education is attained. Pasumai Trust would try to appoint 4 new teachers in 4 government schools via a Parents Teachers Association (PTA). An additional two people would directly the community in local villages including the parents in and around the district and help in organizing the PTA. In addition, Pasumai Trust is also planning to meet with other like-minded NGOs to discuss issues of migrant workers' rights and the education of their children.

Overall, Mr. Murthy & Pasumai Trust's efforts to bring about a positive change in the lives of migrant workers and make basic education a right to their children are truly commendable. I recommend that project Build by Pasumai Trust and the new proposal should be supported by Asha for Education.