

Asha for Education

STATUS REPORT
2006

A report on the Asha
Bangalore site at
Chandranagar School,
Kumaraswamy Layout

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CHANDRANAGAR GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL, KUMARASWAMY LAYOUT, BANGALORE CITY DISTRICT

A current status report, learning levels analysis, and investigation of target areas in need of improvement

Background

Chandranagar Government Primary School was created in 2002, beginning in a one-room shack with a small group of students. Currently, the school has grown to a strength of 300 with the help of the Karnataka Government and through the adoption of two NGOs—Shikshana Foundation and Asha for Education. Asha's influence in the school has been quite substantial thus far. Asha hired three teachers to add to the four teachers already provided by the government. Asha Bangalore and its volunteers have also

constructed a partition to divide the first and fourth standard classroom, conducted workshops for teachers, conducted classes, and also sponsored a trip to Bannerghatta Park for the students. The influence of Asha and its programs has not been well documented in past years, and since Chandranagar is still quite a young school, its progress as a whole is also undocumented. This project is directed towards changing that, and also towards exploring how to better utilize Asha's volunteers and resources to catalyze progress in Chandranagar School.

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Top Left: Praveen, Salvakumar, Mangunta, Akhila, Sindhu
Bottom Left: Vani, Ganga, Jayakumari, Rupa, Lakkamma

Project Objectives

The goals of this project are three-fold:

1. Assess Learning Levels

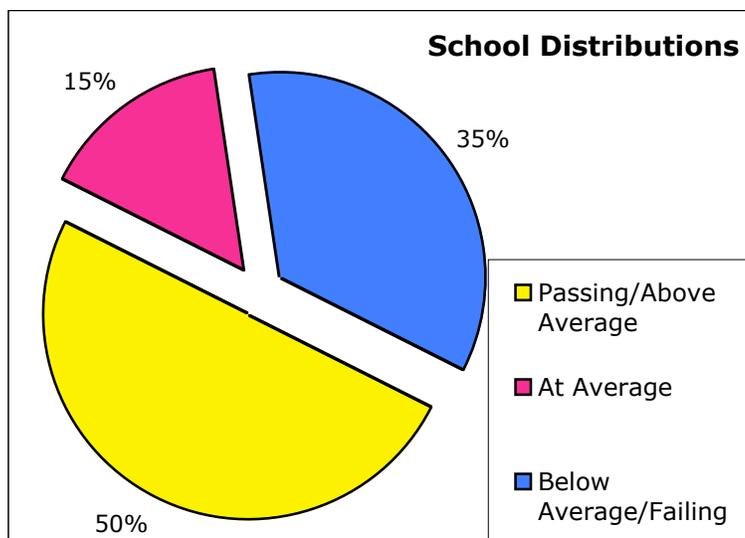
Analyze the current learning levels of the children of Chandranagar Government Primary School to get a base-line perspective on the performance of the children. The National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), a division of Indian Institutes of Science, has developed a comprehensive analytical study that will be applied to this school. The NIAS study includes student evaluations for second, fourth, and seventh standards.

2. Target Weaknesses

After getting a general idea of the learning levels of students, other areas of the school, such as its infrastructure, daily functioning, meals program, lesson planning, teacher performance, etc. should be evaluated through observation and interviews. This will provide for a broader perspective on the general status of the school, and will also highlight the strong points, but also the weak points of the school that can be targeted further by Asha.

3. Create a Model for Future Evaluation

Devise a comprehensive yet concise scheme for continuing the evaluation process. By creating an easily applicable method for evaluating the performance of schools in a short period of time, this Asha project can be analyzed on a yearly or biyearly basis. This will give volunteers a better understanding of their impact in the school as a whole, and will provide insights on how to better implement Asha resources to ensure progress in the school.



School Statistics

300	Students
116	SC-ST
183	Lower to Middle Castes
1	Brahmin

Government Passing Rate: 35% Marks (although all students pass on to the next grade, no matter their situation, progress or percentage scores)

ACHIEVEMENT STATISTICS ACCORDING TO SCHOOL 'S REPORTS

<u>I - V Standards</u>	
50 %	passing
15%	at passing rate (35/100)
35%	failing
<u>VI - VII Standards</u>	
50%	passing (30% first class, 20% second class)
15%	at passing rate
35%	failing

APPROXIMATELY 65% TOTAL PASSING RATE

05-06 Academic Year Fees

..... Government Provides:

- Free textbooks
- Free uniforms
- Rs. 500 for 4 government paid teachers for classroom supplies
- Rs. 2000 School Grant (chalk, etc)
- Rs. 5000 Repairs

Canara Bank gives 4000 Rs/year to purchase notebooks with drawing competition

Shishkhana Trust provides up to Rs. 20,000 yearly for library books, prizes, teaching aids, exam expenses, maintenance, and field visits.

Salaries:

Name	Employer	Rs./Month
Dilsad Begum	Gov't	12000
Padmaja (HM)	Gov't	8591
Vijaylakshmi	Gov't	7309
Nalina	Gov't	6965
Manjunath	Asha	2400
Maunesh	Asha	2000
Siddegowda	Asha	2000

Note: the government pays salary according to years of service. Dilsad Begum has served 27 years, but only two months with Chandranagar School. Padmaja has served 13 years (see HM section), and Nalina has served 1 year. Note how starting salaries for government teachers are significantly higher in the present day.

Evaluation Examples	II Std.	IV Std.	VII Std.
<p>NIAS developed evaluations for II, IV, and VII Standards. Approximately 10 children from each class were surveyed</p>	<p>EVS</p> <p>Children sort items based on their composition– either glass, plastic, or wooden.</p> <p>Ex. pencil, plastic bag, mirror</p>	<p>EVS</p> <p>Matching based on if something is “living” or “non-living.”</p> <p>Ex. mountain, bird, hair</p>	<p>English/EVS/ Social Science</p> <p>English: Students read a story and answer 10 multiple-choice questions based on comprehension.</p> <p>EVS/Social Science: Questions on sound and matter; students work with an India map and answer questions.</p>
	<p>Kannada</p> <p>Matching written words with their corresponding picture.</p> <p>Ex. “sara” = necklace</p>	<p>Kannada</p> <p>Students listen to a passage and then write answers to questions based on comprehension.</p>	<p>Kannada</p> <p>Students are given a series of pictures and asked to compose a small story based on the pictures.</p>
	<p>Math</p> <p>Students are asked to put 17 bottle-caps into a basket. Then, how many should be added to make 20?</p>	<p>Math</p> <p>Word problems</p> <p>Ex. Kala has 436 bags of raagi, Ravi has 704, John has 319. How many total?</p>	<p>Math</p> <p>If the shadow of a 2 m. tall man standing is 6 m. long, then what is the length of the shadow of a giraffe that is 5 m. tall?</p>

NIAS Evaluation Method

The National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) designed the “District Quality Education Project,” which is essentially a series of evaluation instruments targeted towards providing a detailed picture of schools, classroom culture, teaching, and teachers. The study is also geared towards gauging community involvement in schools, as well as profiling children’s learning as its primary goal (NIAS 2003). Questions on student learning were designed based on a study of textbooks, school assessments, expert advice, research, and on an understanding of children’s cognitive development. Student learning evaluations were created for second, fourth, and seventh standards, specifically tailored for Kannada Medium Schools. The II and IV Std. evaluations are done mostly on a one-on-one basis. Children are asked questions on Environmental

Sciences (EVS), Kannada Language, and Mathematics. The evaluation is designed so that the child feels relaxed, and it is supposed to be fun and activity-based. There is no time limit, but most children take approximately one hour to finish the test. The VII Std. evaluation takes around two hours, and is designed for more cognitively mature children. Subjects tested include EVS, Maths, Kannada, and English Language. Since children should be accustomed to school-based academic learning, the evaluation is essentially paper-pencil, although there is one “reading aloud” section. Before beginning the exam, students are informed that the evaluation does not count for marks, and that it essentially interactive and unconventional. The purpose is not only to understand *how much* children know, but also to find out *how exactly* these children learn and process questions. Many of the reading

aloud passages are evaluated for the style in which children read, not only for accuracy. Similarly, mathematics questions are also evaluated on how exactly a child solves a problem, as well as if the answer is correct. All evaluations and questions are explained thoroughly, and students are encouraged to answer questions independently, but also to correct their mistakes. Comprehensively, the evaluation areas cover specific knowledge, conceptual development, understanding, expression, creativity, observation, application, skills, school-based learning, and everyday knowledge.

Sampling

Samples were based on the following:

- Class Size (approx. 25% of class evaluated)
- Gender
- Representative Caste Distribution
- Random Variety of Learning Levels

II Std.

Ten students from II Std. were evaluated based on EVS, Kannada, and Mathematics. Information on family background and caste was also collected.

Most questions were quantified based on their content. For example, a maths question based on writing a series of five numbers is worth five points.

Out of the ten students evaluated, 40% were SC students.

Lakshmi (G)

Father unemployed, Mother factory worker.

TOTAL: 114/168 (68%)

Vinutha (G)

Father spreads tiles, mother housewife.

Prakash (B)

Father lorry worker, Mother street sweeper.

Shalini (G)

Father tiler, Mother housemaid.

Ragu (B)

Father a painter, Mother housemaid.

Prashant (B)

Father deceased, Mother housecleaner.

Sathish (B)

Father mason worker, Mother housewife.

Priyanka (G)

Father left family, Mother works in brick factory.

Kaavya (G)

Father construction worker, Mother factory worker.

Manikanta

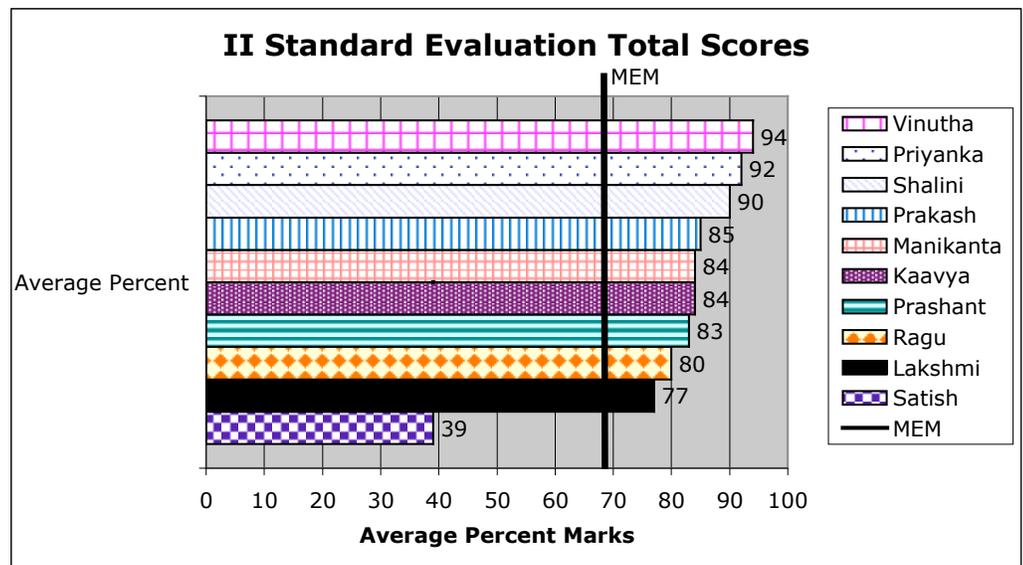
(B)
Father mason worker, Mother housewife.

Analysis

10 Students from II Standard were selected for this evaluation: 5 boys and 5 girls, from various castes. It must be noted that the children chosen for this evaluation were recommended by the II Standard teacher, so they were not independently or randomly chosen by Asha. This may have led to a slight imbalance in the data, as the school-teacher most likely recommended the brighter students in the class for the evaluation.

The National Institute of Advanced Studies devised a standard mark with which to compare all evaluation results. The MEM, or "minimum expected mark" is essentially a standard set for Kannada and Math sections, derived from what II Standard students should know, based on their school syllabus, cognitive development, and also with an error factored in (children are guaranteed to make some mistakes during a testing scenario). Thus, the learning levels of the students should be compared to the MEM. Scores above the MEM are considered average and above average, scores below the MEM are considered below average.

Overall, the II Standard students evaluated fared quite well in comparison to the MEM. On average, children should have been able to score at least 68% on the entire evaluation. 90% of the students were above this minimum expected mark. It is unclear exactly to what degree this data may misrepresent the second standard class. The only child that was significantly below the rest, Sathish, could have had a learning disability. He was unable to read, write, or do any of the math questions without quite a bit of help. With a class size of 56 students, it is easy for a child that may be behind the rest to fall even further behind in his or her studies. However, the majority of students tested seemed to be above the minimum mark, showing skills in both literacy and numeracy.



II Standard Mathematics

With the MEM set at 62%, this means that 9/10 of the class II students could accurately complete 62% of the maths evaluation. Overall, 90% of the II Std. students tested were above the MEM in mathematics.

The maths exam tests for number sense, understanding of operations (addition and subtraction), and basic computational ability. None of the children could complete double-digit addition and subtraction problems with carry-over, thus, eight simplistic addition and subtraction questions were created instead. The NIAS material is designed for a student that has completed II Standard. These students had only spent two months in II Std. at evaluation time. Thus, questions based on what they currently should know were created and students were evaluated on how they performed on the simplified questions. 90% of the children could complete the basic addition problems (e.g. 5+3, 1+5); however, all students needed direct attention and help to do so. No child could complete subtraction questions on their own (e.g. 6-2, 7-1). The children that correctly answered these questions only did so after physically being helped through the use of counting with fingers, etc.

II Standard Kannada

II Standard students were evaluated on their basic skills with the Kannada language, such as reading and writing *sarala* and *gunitha* alphabets and words. Most children needed quite a bit of help on these sections if they asked, thus, the results may be surprisingly high.

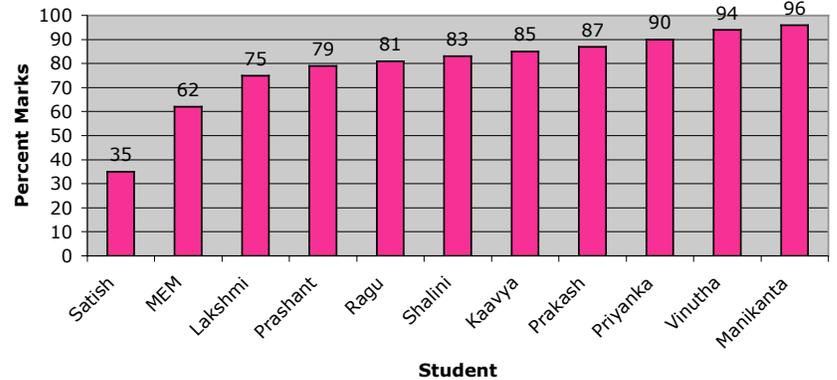
Overall, the MEM for Kannada with a 15% error margin was 74%. 80% of the students tested scored above this average, and 20% were below average. None of the children were fully fluent in reading with meaning, inflection, and punctuation. Furthermore, none of the children read in word-by-word style without inflection, which is the next possible level for reading after the highest ability of full fluency. In NIAS terms, 90% of the children were "inefficient readers," reading in alphabet-by-alphabet style, meaning that they sounded out each letter and then reframed the letters to form a word, without use of inflection. 10% of the children were only able to read *ka-gunitha* letters, if at all. Otherwise, children mostly had difficulty with the alphabets and words involving *ottakshara* characters.

Most common problems were centered around questions based on listening comprehension. Students often needed multiple prompts when answering questions based on a story read or listened to. None of the children could write on their own. Furthermore, 100% of the children needed help spelling and writing answers. None of the children could write out full sentences on their own, instead, they wrote in single words with some prompting. The process of writing was laborious for most children, with most children using inefficient methods of forming the actual letters on paper.

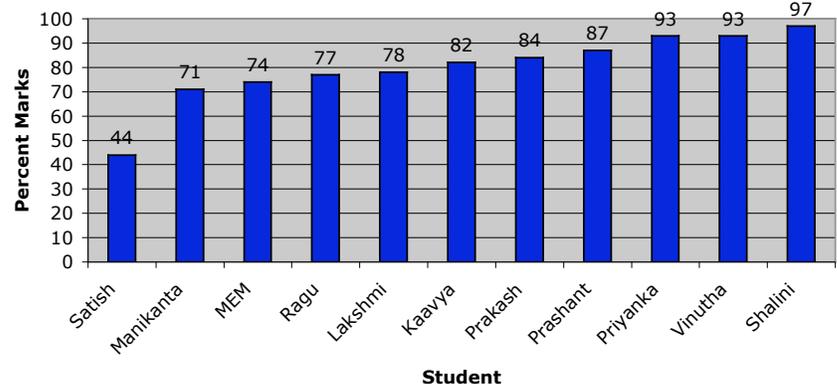
EVS

Children are asked to identify animals, discuss eating animal habits, and classify objects based on if they were made of plastic, glass, or wood. Students could recognize on average 77% of the animals shown to them. Some of the most common mistakes in classifying objects include 40% of the students thinking that plastic bag is made of glass. Only 30% of the students could identify a mirror correctly as glass object. Students seemed to fare relatively well on this section; however, its content was initially designed more to serve as an introduction to the evaluation process as described by NIAS.

Mathematics Percentage Marks



Kannada Percentage Marks



Reasons For High Quantitative Results

- On the Kannada section, students received quite a bit of help with writing characters and words from the teachers assisting in the evaluation process
- The students chosen for this exam were given through recommendation by the II Std. teacher himself
- The actual ability to read is not included in the qualitative presentation of the results- instead, one can only give observational data

IV Standard

10 Students from IV Standard were randomly chosen for this exam.

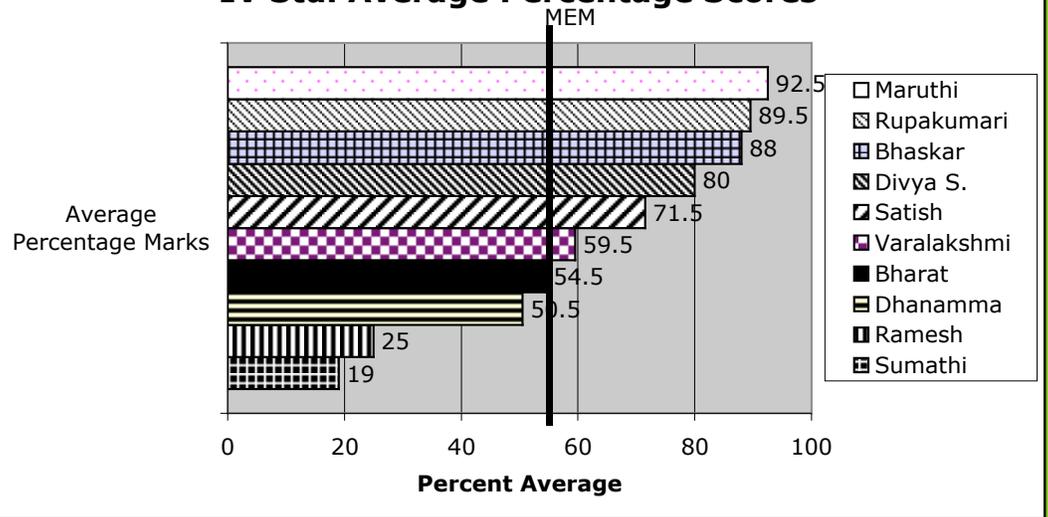
Girls:

- Divya; father a painter, mother housemaid; SC
- Rupakumari; father fixes water pipes, mother housewife
- Sumathi; mother cleans vessels, father mason worker
- Dhanamma; mother mason worker, no father; SC
- Varalakshmi; father a painter, mother works in factory

Boys:

- Maruthi; new admission
- Satish; father plumber, mother masonry
- Bharat; father in construction, mother housemaid
- Ramesh; father driver, mother housewife
- Bhaskar; father electrical; mother housemaid

IV Std. Average Percentage Scores



The average MEM for IV Standard Kannada and Maths examinations was 59%. The students of IV Standard scored as follows: 40% were below the MEM, and 60% were above. The potential for a more varied result as compared to the II Standard evaluations is perhaps due to the fact that students were randomly selected by Asha only. It is important to note as well that the child that scored the best overall, Maruthi, is a new student to Chandranagar School, only having spent two months there as of yet.

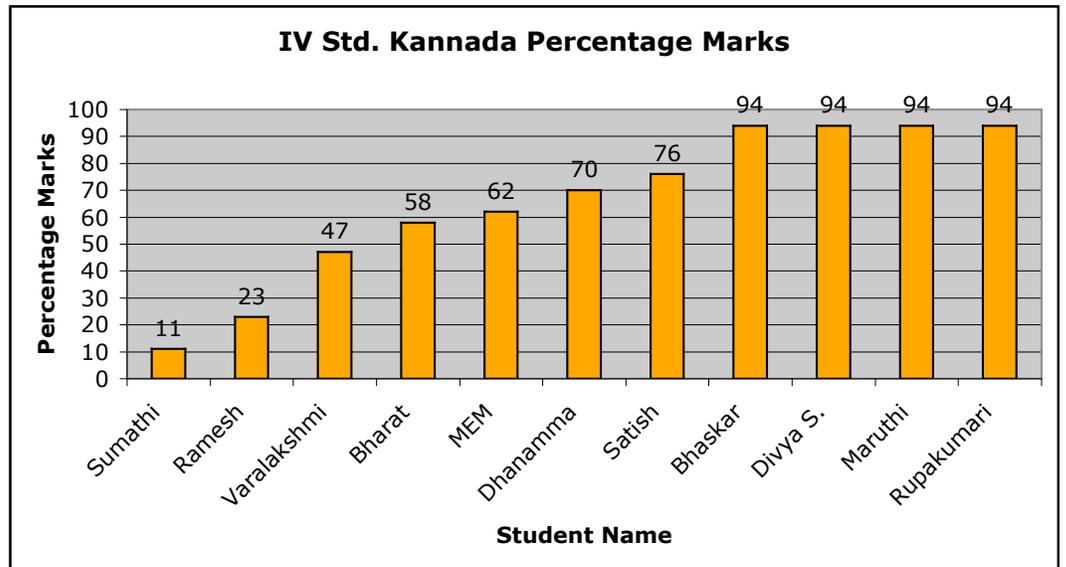
IV Standard Kannada Language

The IV Standard scored with 60% of the students above the average minimum expected mark, and 40% below. It is also specifically important to note that 20% of the students evaluated were unable to read basic characters. However, both of these students, when asked to read a passage, made up words and spoke them quickly, as if reading.

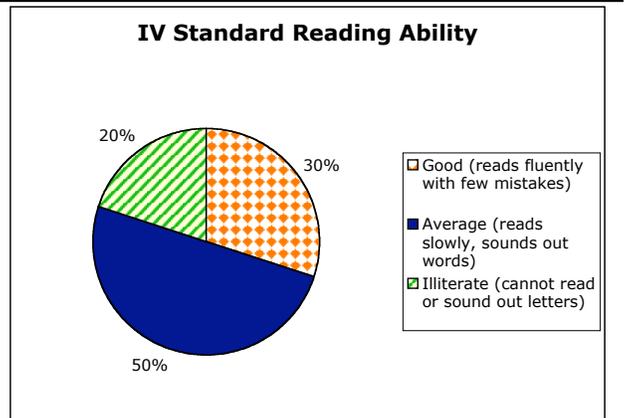
30% were fully fluent with meaning, inflection, and punctuation while reading. 40% were reading word-by-word without inflection and with some errors. 10% were inefficient readers, only reading by syllable. 20% of the students could not read.

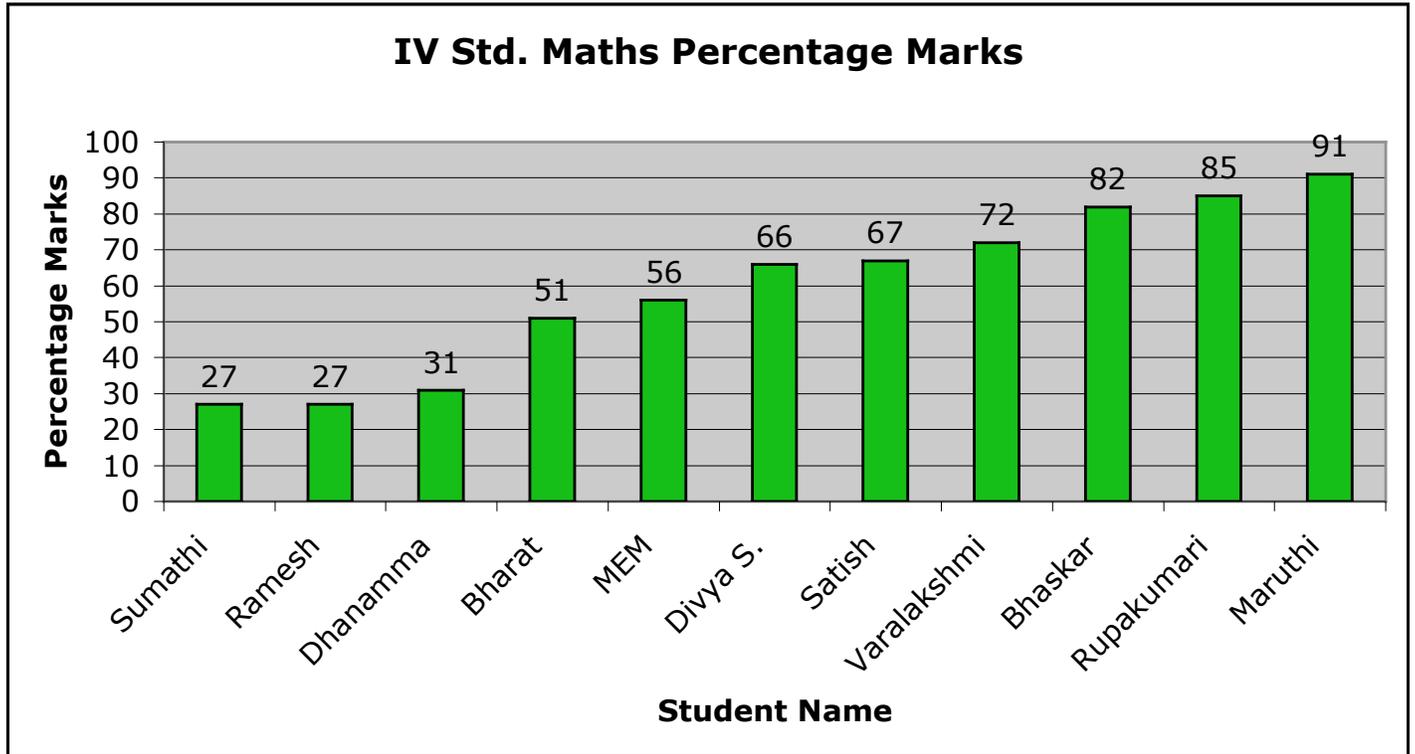
Students were also asked to write their own stories in response to a series of pictures. 20% could only write random letters. 10% could not compose a story on their own, thereby trying to copy the stories of other students. The remaining 70% of the children could write fairly advanced stories in reference to the pictures, even using words with ottakshara letters; however, none of these students could use good sentence structure.

IV Std. Kannada Percentage Marks



IV Standard Reading Ability



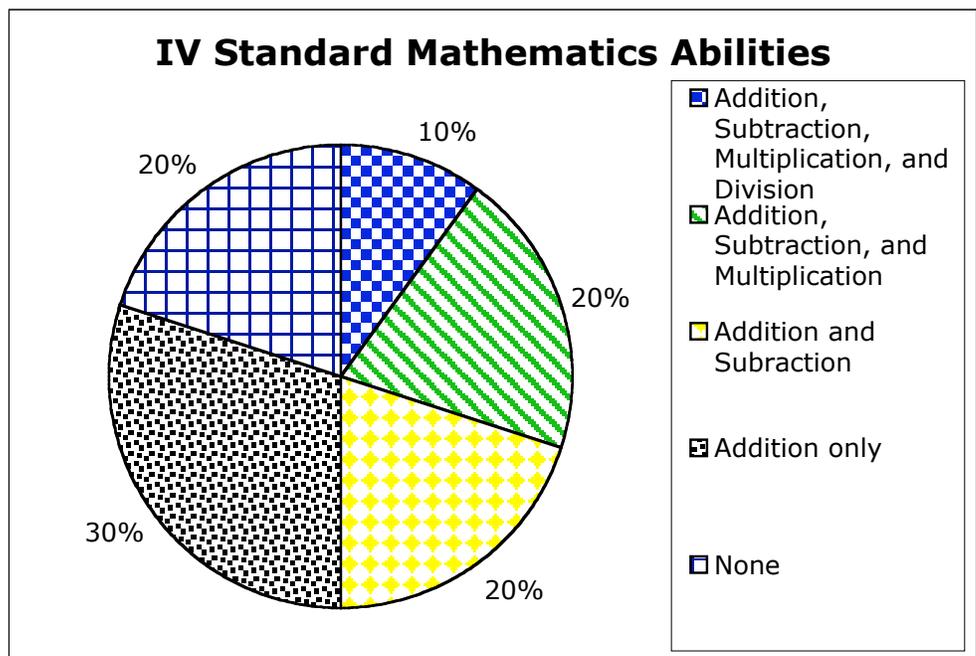


IV Standard Mathematics

The minimum expected mark for mathematics was 56%, meaning that these students, considering what they have learned according to school syllabi and cognitive development, along with the potential for test-taking errors, should have scored at least 56% on this examination to be average students. 60% of the IV Std. students scored above the MEM, and 40% below. The two children with the 27% score could barely do the counting sections, let alone addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. The child that was able to score the best on the mathematics test was also from another school, recently transferring to Chandranagar.

Overall, children had significant difficulty with seemingly basic questions. Only 50% of the children could accurately identify the biggest and smallest numbers in a random sequence of 6 numbers (including single, double, and triple digit numbers). No child could read a word problem on their own and solve it- most questions took extensive explanation for the children to understand. Approximately 50% of the students were still counting on their fingers when doing most problems as well, meaning that they still have not mastered basic algorithms for doing computational problems, for example. This could mean that children were not familiar enough with computation, or that they did not have enough practice. As far as basic computational abilities are concerned, see the following graph to gauge comprehension levels of the IV Std. students.

According to their syllabi, students in IV standard should certainly know addition, subtraction, and multiplication. Knowledge of division may be rare for students starting IV Std.



BOYS:

- Praveen
- Salvakumar
- Dinesh
- Santosh
- Manjunath

GIRLS:

- Rekha
- Jayakumari
- Vimala
- Vani
- Deepika

VII Standard

The VII Standard consists of 31 students- 10 boys and 21 girls. The students surveyed represents approximately 33% of the entire class. The average MEM was calculated based on the mathematics and Kannada language portions of the exam; however, the VII Standard evaluation also included sections on Environmental Studies, Social Science, and English. The average MEM was calculated to be 65.5%. 40% of the VII Standard students scored below the MEM, and 60% above. The VII Std. students are given a paper-pencil test, and with instruction, are expected to be able to have the maturity to complete the test on their own. One of the biggest issues with the VII Std. evaluations pertained to this specific point-students had incredible difficulty completing the test without asking how to do each and every problem, and without being tempted to interact with one another to solve problems. Cheating was also an issue, as children that were particularly below average spent almost the entire testing period trying to copy the answers of other students.

VII Std. Mathematics

The MEM for VII Std. mathematics is set at 65%. Students were given a paper-pencil test, and mathematics questions consisted of: writing out numbers in word-form, ordering numbers from smallest to largest, continuing series of numbers (counting by 11's, negative number series), addition with and without decimals, subtraction with and without decimals, multiplication, division, numerical equations, logic, fractions, reading graphs, area, and reasoning through word problems. On average, 60% of the students scored above the MEM, and 40% below. The students typically had the most trouble with the question on fractions and area, as well as the numerical equation section. Only 50% of the students could write a series of numbers (-5, -4, -3, are given, and students are asked to write the next three numbers). See the above

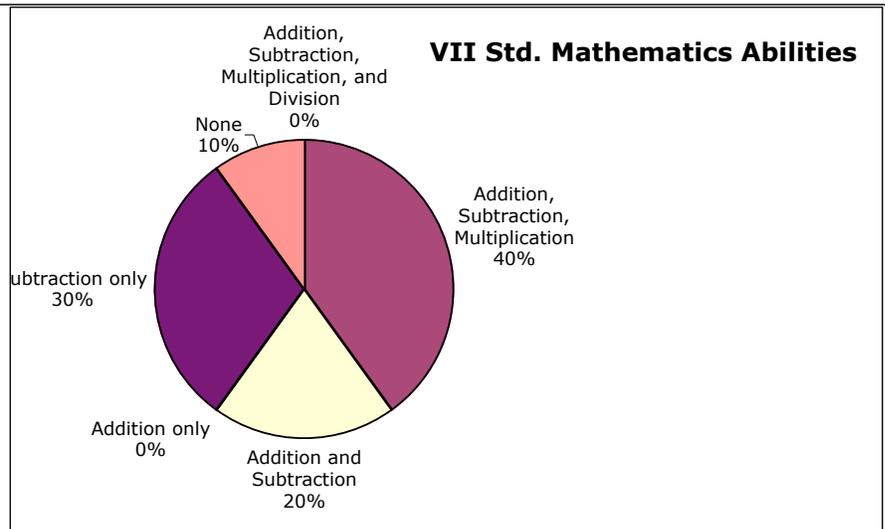
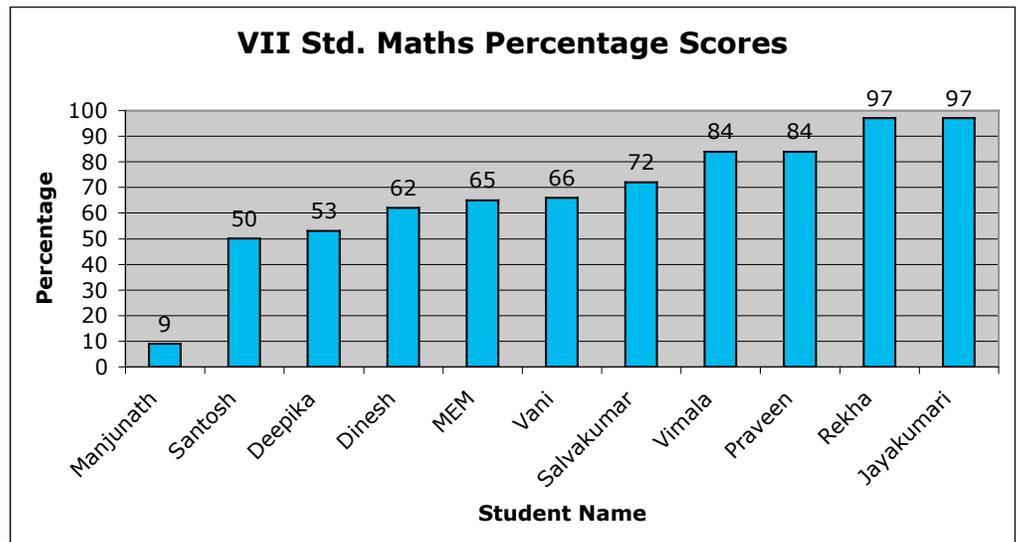
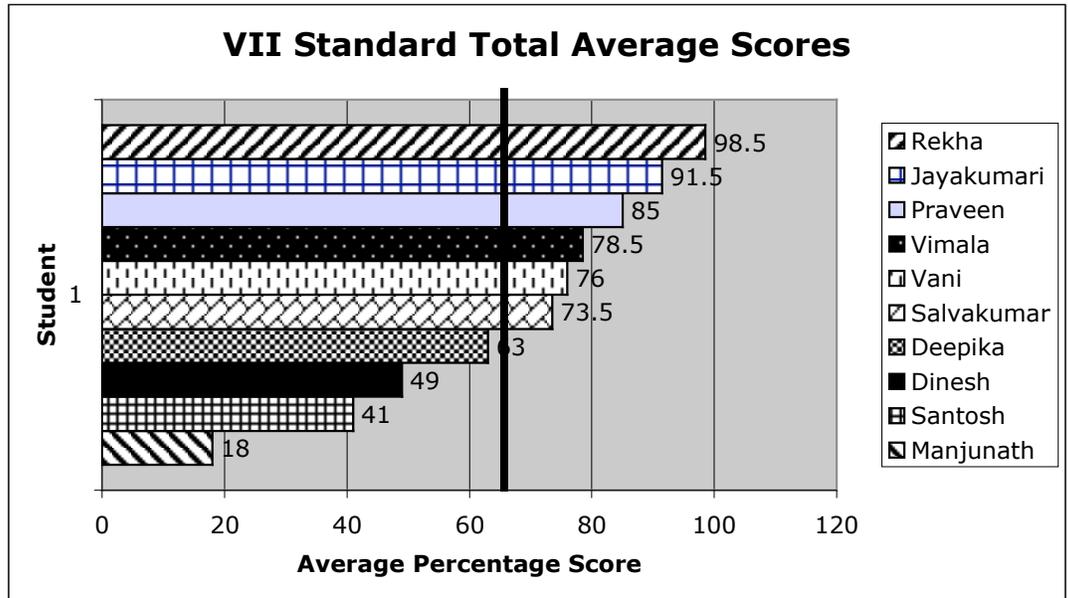
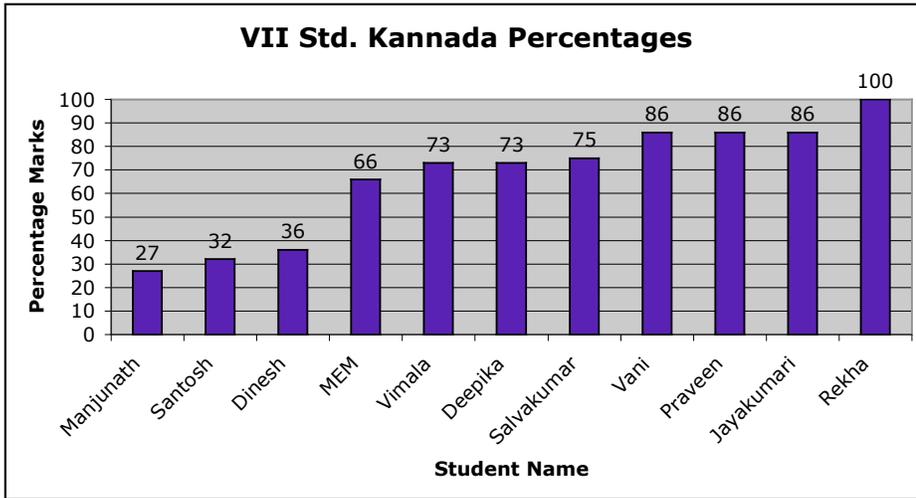


chart for VII Std. computational abilities. According to their syllabus, students should be familiar with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Oddly enough, the stu-

dents that had most trouble with standard operations could usually complete one of the subtraction problems, but not the addition.



VII Standard Kannada Language

..... The MEM for VII Std. Kannada was set at 66%. 70% of the students performed above the MEM, and 30% below. When asked to read a paragraph, 70% of the students were fully fluent with meaning, inflection, and punctuation. 10% of the students read well with occasional alphabet-by-alphabet style. 20% of the students could not read at all.

..... When asked to write answers to questions on reading and listening comprehension, 70% of the students were able to write full sentences. 10% of the students used a mix of words, phrases, and sentences. 20% of the students used only words or phrases, if at all, either copied from the original questions or completely made up.

On the free writing section, 40% of the students were able to write full sentences with punctuation and relevance to the picture. 40% were able to write phrases or one-sentence long paragraphs. 20% of the students could not write comprehensible sentences, if at all.

EVS, Social Science, and English

..... NIAS does not supply a method for analysis of the Environmental Science, Social Science, and English portions of the VII Std. evaluation; however, it is important to note some remarks on the performance of students on these subjects.

..... In EVS, students were asked multiple-choice questions. One question asked the students to correctly identify the medium in which sound travels. None of the students could identify, "gas," as the correct answer. 30% of the students thought sound travels through solid, liquid, and gas. 20% of the students thought it travels through liquid and gas, and 50% of the students did not answer the question.

..... The Social Science section of the evaluation asked students to correctly write out the year of particular events in India's history, such as India's independence, the rule of Tippu Sultan in Mysore, etc. There was also a section on geography, where a map of India is given and students are asked to identify Karnataka, along with other landmarks and countries. Only 30% of the students could accurately identify Karnataka's location, while 30% of the students could locate its general vicinity, and 40% could not accurately identify its location at all.

..... The English section consisted of the evaluator reading out a passage in English while the students read along. Then students were asked to complete four multiple-choice questions. Students were generally able to read out questions, but they could rarely understand what the question was asking. Finally, children were asked to construct any sentence including the word "happy." None of the children could construct a grammatically correct sentence. Some examples of student produced sentences, including their spelling mistakes, are: "I'll father and mother happy," "I'll playing with my fring or happy," and "I my happy."



A Typical Day at Chandranagar School

The school day begins at 9:30 AM, with a morning assembly and prayer conducted outside the school. Most teachers conduct all classes for a specific grade, however, there is a significant amount of trading around done by established teachers. There are six hours in a day available for teaching, 9:30 AM-3:30 PM. Usually one hour is reserved for lunch, sponsored by the Mid-Day Meals Program. Children have lessons in Kannada, English, Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, and Mathematics. All children are provided free textbooks by the Government of Karnataka (GOK), and notebooks and other supplies are provided by various NGOs and by external funds.

Classes are conducted typically in lecture style. The class begins with a motivational song or rhyme, to focus and excite the children (see the Lesson Plan section for more detail on how exactly lessons are conducted).

Since the school is relatively open-air, children are easily distracted by noise outside. Children are also often called to perform little tasks, such as bringing chairs to the office, fetching chalk, sweeping the outside paths around the classrooms, or beating the erasers, for example. The number of children wandering about outside of the classroom at any given time is remarkable, and there seems to be little order or discipline to control this issue. It is often the teacher that sends children to perform menial tasks during lesson time.

Class periods are timed according to the Headmistresses' task of keeping track of the time. Class periods are signaled to end with a makeshift bell. Oftentimes, teachers are occupied in different classrooms, so they are commonly late arriving to the next class. A great deal of time is wasted in this fashion.

Two government-sponsored programs take place throughout the day. The Radio Listen Program is scheduled for different times depending on the grade in question. From 2:30-3:30 PM, students that have difficulty reading participate in the GOK and Akshara Foundation's Reading Program. Children that are not part of this program often spend the final hour of the day playing, doing homework, or doing dictations or any other tasks as instructed by the teacher (see Government Programs Section for more analysis on this issue).

Since children in Chandranagar School live quite close to the school itself, close to 100% of all students walk home with one another. Very rarely does one see parents coming to pick up their children from school at the end of the day.

Daily Issues

A collection of seemingly minor issues that may play a large role in the disorganization of regular school functioning.

1. Ubiquitous Fetching of the "Chalk Piece"

Teachers are often unprepared in the most minor of ways. A great majority of teachers at Chandranagar School do not come to the classroom prepared with simple materials, such as chalk. Chalk pieces are stored in the Headmistresses Office, and during any given class period, it is not uncommon to see two or three children from various grades coming to the office to fetch chalk pieces. If teachers simply came to classes prepared, class time would not be wasted, the messengers would not miss lessons, and the general rigor of the lesson would not be disrupted.

2. Street-Sweeping of Sorts

Since there is no specific person hired to take care of the general cleanliness of the school, children are often instructed to sweep the classrooms or the paths outside the schoolrooms periodically during the day. Once again, students sweeping the paths while classes have resumed creates a situation where children are often missing lessons while performing menial tasks.

3. Noise from Outside

It is extremely easy for children of any age to be distracted by noise outside. This factors more into the infrastructural issues. When it is hot outside, windows are open for ventilation, so children outside that may be playing, participating in other activities, or even wandering around during class time when they are not supposed to be out of class often stick their heads into the windows of other classrooms and disrupt classroom activity.

4. Attendance

Attendance is regularly documented by teachers. However, on an hourly basis, it is quite common that children will not attend certain class periods. When children have lunch break, some go home to take their meals. These children are in no way guaranteed to return to class after lunch. Some children do not come back, while others return often one or two periods late. These issues are hard to manage, since the school does not have a standardized method for keeping track of children at all times. Many of these issues are also tied into infrastructure and organizational issues that will be discussed in detail further on in this report.

Student Attendance Statistics (July 2006):

II Standard (56 Students):

..... Average of 20%, or 11 students absent per day .

IV Standard (46 Students):

..... Average of 7%, or 4 students absent per day.

VII Standard (31 Students):

..... Average of 13%, or 4 students absent per day.

Headmistress Interview

Chandranagar Government Primary School has had the same Headmistress (HM) since its opening in 2002– Padmaja M.R.. She has 11 years of service as a teacher, and has completed her PUC, and TCH degree.

Training/Headmastership

Padmaja Madam did not receive any special training for becoming the headmistress. She was appointed by government officials, and despite her continuous attempts to pass on the job of HM to a more senior teacher, no one else is willing to take on the responsibilities of the HM.

Padmaja decided to go into teaching simply because she loves children, and the fact that she can be a positive role model and influence in a child's life.

The duties of the HM are as follows:

- Oversee the daily activities and school functioning.
- Teach classes (Padmaja Madam takes 3 classes per day)
- Head the SDMC (School Development and Monitoring Committee) along with SDMC President. This includes calling meetings and getting signatures or thumbprints from SDMC Board Members when any sort of school decision is made.
- Hire contractors and get three separate quotations for any construction grants received from the GOK.
- Monitor the funds of the school with a joint account kept with the SDMC President.
- Oversee the attendance and salary distribution for all teachers.
- Keep track of school statistics, attendance of students.
- Keep a detailed record of all of the school accounts and its spending.
- Ensure that fiber tablets are distributed to children once every other day as supplied by GOK.
- Go into the community once a week to check on students with poor attendance, as well as recruit dropout or wandering children from the surrounding area.
- Submit to inspections by GOK.
- Oversee the progress of trainee teachers sent once a year by various teaching institutions.
- Track the progress of the school, oversee teachers, manage student issues, and serve as a figurehead for the school.

Primary Issue in the School According to HM

Headmistress' Duties: *The HM duties are too strenuous.* All grants are in the hands of the HM. The SDMC (School Development and Monitoring Committee), while jointly involved in distributing grant money, is not directly accountable for how money is spent. In Padmaja Madam's opinion, the GOK should appoint contractors to handle building grants. The HM has to find contractors, and get multiple quotes for any construction. The HM receives no training on how to handle such issues, which include accounting, auditing, etc. The GOK regularly comes to inspect the school, and if the regulations and procedures placed under the HM's care are not followed to the letter, *only the HM is punished through a direct salary reduction.* Without training, Padmaja Madam made small mistakes in the past without realizing it, and her salary was reduced.

On one hand, the regulations placed by the government are intended to prevent the HM from abusing his or her control of school fees. However, even honest and hardworking HMs make mistakes, and are penalized harshly. The possibility for unknowingly making mistakes is high, since the HM receives no specific training or specialized help in monitoring his or her duties.

The HM's duties also take a toll on Padmaja Madam's ability to teach in the school. With only seven teachers in Chandranagar School, Padmaja Madam used to take multiple class periods during the school day. Now she can only take three class periods. There is always more work external to her duties as a teacher, and she feels that *both she and the students suffer* because of it.

Padmaja Madam also feels that the SDMC *does not adequately understand all of the rules and regulations put on the HM.* Thus, they are often unsympathetic to what she must deal with.

Other Thoughts from the HM

1. Medical Issues: Not only does the school provide an education for their students, but they are also *responsible for medical care as directed by the GOK.*

2. Teachers: The HM and the school-teachers have a good relationship with one another in general. One of Padmaja Madam's main fears is that her teachers will not cooperate with her, thus, she keeps a very friendly environment for her teachers. This also results in hiding potential issues of contention from one another, and letting discrepancies among teachers slide. This is clearly

an inappropriate way of handling interpersonal issues in the school, and only leads to more intense problems. In order to keep problems from escalating, Padmaja avoids tension and tries her best to ensure that the other teachers respect her.

3. Community: In terms of community, the school and the HM only has a direct relationship with the parents. However, the community has a good impression of Padmaja Madam as well as the school, particularly because of school functions. The Annual School Day function, for example, often draws a large crowd of community members. Padmaja Madam's main goal is to ensure that all children in the community attend the school, and that community members respect the school and think that it can be competitive with area private schools.

4. Administration: The GOK administration officials often throw money at the school, according to Padmaja Madam, but give a timeframe in which the money should be spent. They give no instructions on how the money should be spent, and through lack of expert knowledge, money is often squandered. This falls within the issue in regards to the fact that the *HM does not receive adequate training.*

5. Government Programs: Padmaja Madam finds the government programs to be adequate (see more on this in GOK section). As long as there are an adequate number of teachers to fulfill program requirements, she feels comfortable using them.

Ambitions

- Bring all 6-14-year-old children to school in this locality.
- Build a compound wall and gate to protect the school from intrusions. Oftentimes, the pavement around the classrooms are destroyed by vagrant members of the community that can come into the school uncontrolled at night. There have also been cases of vandalism. The playground area also serves as resting ground for cows, stray dogs, and at some times, it is also a parking lot for neighborhood vehicles. Young teenage boys that are not in school often come to the school during the daytime and harass the children as they are eating and playing outside. The HM is weary of speaking harshly to these people, for fear that they will take retribution and continue to destroy the school at night. This issue has been brought up with the CMC (City Municipal Corporation), however, no money to build has come yet.
- All children should get adequate uniforms. Only SCST students received their Saturday white uniforms this year.

SDMC and Parents

The SDMC, or School Development and Monitoring Committee, consists of 9 board members, and one president. All members of the SDMC are parents. The concept of the SDMC was created seven years ago under the SSA Government Plan, and essentially, the SSA gives many grants to the government school, and the SDMC serves as a check on how money is spent. Essentially the SDMC functions as follows:

- Regulation of Money Spent: a meeting with the HM and SDMC Board must be called before any expenditure takes place. Signatures or thumb-prints must be acquired for approval.
 - A joint account is held between HM and SDMC president for writing checks.
 - The SDMC must hold regular meetings.
 - The SDMC participates in school functions.
- The SDMC is comprised as follows:
- All parents, but usually only mothers take part.
 - Reservation: 2 board members must be SC (this committee has 5 SC)

Current Issues

The SDMC president has a great deal of influence in the school, as she has a joint bank account directly with the HM, and also has to approve all of the activities and decisions made by the school. In essence, the SDMC is a highly powerful group, but comprised of basically one person: the president. Other parents and board members occasionally show up for meetings, but attendance is usually sparse, and since many of the parents are illiterate or uneducated, it is often difficult for them to understand or appreciate the depth of school issues. Members and parents often do not understand exactly what must take place for any changes to occur in the school, nor do they understand the burden placed on the HM alone to deal with school grants.

In general, the SDMC president supports Padmaja Madam's decisions. However, their relationship is maintained by a fine balance, often involving a sort of "whitewashing" of issues, so that problems are often hidden or simplified, in order to prevent conflict. One specific issue that arose in July-August 2006 involved that of an Asha-paid teacher, Mr. Manjunath. Mr. Manjunath also is the nephew of the SDMC president, which should have kept him from being hired three years ago. However, he has been teaching at Chandranagar for three years now, and there has been quite a lot of contention in relation to some of his activities and behavior at the school. According to Padmaja Madam, he had taken more than the 15 allotted "casual leaves" per year, but Padmaja Madam was covering up that fact, in order to prevent tension. This issue was brought up with Asha recently, and has only caused more trouble-outbursts from Mr. Manjunath and disagreements between the HM and SDMC president (who erratically varies her support from her nephew to the HM). It is worthwhile to note how important it is not to hire someone that is related to the SDMC, as they have a lot of power and authority with the school. Irrational threats and actions taken in part by SDMC could detract heavily to the well-being of the school. Fault can be found amongst all parties, but it is important to realize just how much disorganization and trouble nepotism and secrecy can cause.

SDMC President

Interview

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of SDMC members?

It's my school, and in my interest to care about all of the things at school. I have a son in III Std., and have been president for three years.

2. Have you participated in the SDMC training programs?

Yes, one year ago. The program taught me the value of the grant money given by the government. You should treat the money as if it is for your own house and family.

3. What are the problems that you are facing in the SDMC currently?

None.

This is a difficult question, since most of the activities and decisions made by the SDMC rely completely on the president. She often gets no help from other members in petitioning for loans, etc., however, she seems as if she does not expect or want any help.

4. How has the presence of the SDMC impacted the functioning of the school? The SDMC finds donors for the school. Shrishakti Organization is a community group that was designed by the government. They deposit money into our Canara bank account and the bank then matches the donation by half.

5. What are your expectations from the SDMC? What are your suggestions for better functioning?

I expect support and participation from SDMC members, and if the members did more of both, then the school could find more donors and function better.

Discipline in Classrooms

Upon detailed observation, Asha has found that the use of Corporal Punishment is quite prevalent in Chandranagar School. Both the regular teachers and invited trainees carry a stick in the classroom. The following behavior has been observed:

- Classrooms that are quite noisy with little space are difficult to manage. Students that misbehaved were struck on the hand with a stick. The pain felt by the children is visible afterwards, as children often blow on their hands or wince afterwards.
- Students were told to discipline one another. One child was told to hold another child's nose and slap both of his cheeks.
- Children were struck if they did not complete their homework, or if it was left at home.
- Students that could not read Kannada letters at the blackboard were subsequently struck multiple times over the head with a tree branch.

Meeting with Teachers

On July 29, 2006, a meeting was conducted with all of the teachers, trainees, and SDMC president to discuss the issue of corporal punishment. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage the teachers to think about why they might be tempted to use corporal punishment as a way of controlling their classrooms or disciplining their students. The following issues were discussed between Asha volunteers and Chandranagar School teachers:

- There are both moral and psychological arguments against the use of corporal punishment. Children

brought up in schools that used corporal punishment have been found to be unpredictable, since children do not understand how to behave appropriately. Such violence often creates resentment, hostility, and increased chance of vandalism and dropping out among students. The freedom of India was defined on the bases of non-violence, so it seems quite contradictory to think that punishing or coercing children to act correctly through the use of violence is either effective or right.

- Corporal punishment is commonly used at Chandranagar School for the following reasons: children's behavior is out of hand, too much noise, children do not listen to instructions, children do not complete homework, children do not dress correctly, etc. Many of these issues are directly tied into a lack of organization or structured form of discipline in the school. Without a standardized method for disciplining students at school, some bad behavior goes commonly unchecked while other issues result in severe punishment.

- There are many other alternative forms of discipline. Teachers need to establish and verbally communicate high expectations for student behavior.

Clear rules and procedures should be outlined and made known to students, teachers, parents, and community members. If a problem arises, teachers should intervene quickly and make sure that behavior does not go unchecked. If students have self-control issues, they should be taught to observe their own behavior and to talk themselves through appropriate behavioral patterns. Students should be reinforced positively for success, and misbehaving students should be taught

pro-social skills, such as self-awareness, cooperation, and helping.

Some other in-class methods suggested by Asha volunteers:

1. If a child acts out for the first time, write their name on the board. The second time, circle it. Third time, the student should be sent to the HM for further explanation.

2. Give troublemakers responsibilities in the classroom—writing on the chalkboard, putting things away, etc.

3. Kids that interrupt or that are very noisy should be given the responsibility of giving other noisy children the silent signal.

4. Make a large poster with the classroom rules clearly displayed. Each child should sign the poster. Hang it in the front of the class and refer to it when needed.

5. Make signals that are fun to imply a direction, like a rhythm clap to make children stop and listen.

6. Kids often abuse the bathroom issue. Make a pass at the beginning and only allow two boys and two girls at a time. Children should be encouraged to go at specific times—like during lunch.

Follow-Up

Clearly, this issue will not be settled in a short period of time. The school needs to be constantly monitored for progress in this matter. Teachers should be continually checked for their efforts, and further discussions should be conducted periodically in the future to make sure that change is indeed occurring.



Lesson Planning

Chandranagar School teachers are only required to map out three of their lesson plans per day, as indicated by the HM. The GOK provides a general guideline for how lessons should be conducted, guided by a divided syllabus. Teachers often work according to these plans. The GOK provides training up to twice a year on how to create these plans.

Sample Lesson Plan: III Standard

Objective: Teachers outline what kind of competency should be achieved through lesson.

Stages	Initial Activity	2nd Activity
Motivation	Songs, rhymes, action songs.	Students write out songs.
Motivation related to competency	Riddles that students may recognize already.	Fun time, teacher asks casual questions.
Teaching Stage	All teaching done in this stage: explanations, lectures, etc.	Teacher asks students questions.
Exercise Activities	Students answer questions in textbooks, etc.	Ask new riddles, questions.
Application Stage	Ask students to apply what is learned to daily lives.	Students ask one another riddles and interact.
Evaluation	Made by teachers or textbook.	Students recite, are tested, answer written questions

Lesson Planning Problems

Various issues apparent after observation of Chandranagar School

1. Teachers are not required to plan all lessons.

Most Chandranagar School teachers conduct between five to six lessons per day; however, they are only required to plan out three such lessons. The rest of their lessons are planned "in their heads," according to the HM. This could lead to various in-class issues, such as disorganization, wasted time, and lack of interest amongst students.

2. Lesson Planning/Methods of Teaching Entirely the Prerogative and Dedication of Teachers

One can encounter a variety of teaching styles at Chandranagar School. The lesson plan to the left was created by one of the more ambitious teachers at Chandranagar school (note the varieties in activities in the lesson). One of the most common problems in Chandranagar School (also a result of large class sizes), is that many students are easily distracted and are not invested in the lessons. Classes conducted entirely through lecture or entirely through songs and dances are questionably effective, and since there is little standardization throughout the school in this matter, children are subject to a great variety of teaching styles that can be both entirely effective or entirely ineffective. There seems to be little discussion or idea swapping amongst teachers on this matter as well.

3. Effective Use of Class Time

Class periods are divide into six parts throughout the school day. Each period's end is signified when the HM checks her watch, and calls a VII Std. child to leave class to ring the bell. Teachers are often late coming from class to class, perhaps because lessons are not timed effectively. The end of the class period is typically characterized by a rush to write out homework assignments (if the teachers remember to do so), children running in and out of class, and general disorder. Thus, children often return late to class, teachers waste time starting the next period, and a great deal of time is lost.

Infrastructure

There are many issues relating to the infrastructure of Chandranagar School. Some of the primary problems are:

- **Lack of Classrooms:** With a strength of 300+ students in the school, there are only six classrooms in the entire school. One classroom is divided with a wooden partition to separate the first and fourth standard classes. Even if Chandranagar school received more teachers to handle such a large amount of students (some classes have up to 56 students in them), there is no space to put them. Lack of classrooms is a significant issue in the sense that if it is resolved, many of the other problems that stem from large class sizes can be remedied with greater ease.

- **Lack of Restrooms:** There is only one toilet for girls, and one for boys in the entire school. They are in quite a dilapidated state. Children often go to the bathroom in hoards, which often can waste class time or result in a great deal of children wandering around the school at any given time. Due to the lack of restrooms, teachers seem to send more and more students at a time to use the facilities, thus, more children are out of class at a time.

- **Irregular Water Supply:** The GOK only supplies water in huge tanks to Chandranagar school once a month. Oftentimes, the water runs out by the end of the month. This causes a problem with washing the lunch dishes daily, and with restroom use.

- **Compound Wall:** One of the biggest self-proclaimed issues at Chandranagar School is lack of a compound wall. Oftentimes, random civilians from the neighboring area come into the school grounds during the school day and disturb the children or loudly sing songs during class hours. The school has also been vandalized on many occasions— the cement paths along the classrooms are ripped up, and outsiders write nasty things on the school walls and floors. There is also no gate to protect the school from animal intruders as well, so the teachers and students have made no efforts to plant trees or beautify the area for fear that wandering animals will destroy it. The compound wall issue has been brought up with the City Municipal Committee (CMC) according to the SDMC president, however, nothing has happened and no grant money has been supplied as of yet. The Chandranagar School and SDMC have encouraged Asha for Education volunteers to take on this project.

Organization and Planning

One of the biggest issues at Chandranagar School pertains to its organization and general functioning. It is readily apparent that due to a lack of standardization of procedure across the school, children are often roaming around during the day, teachers are late for classes, disciplinary procedures are not clear from class to class, and many children in each classroom seem to be lost in space—missing the lessons due to general disarray within the classroom, or even due to lack of personal attention. It is very easy for a child with little personal motivation or a child that is behind in learning to “slip through the cracks” at Chandranagar School, as is the case in many government schools throughout India. This issue is certainly difficult to address, considering that many of the problems may be deeply rooted within the efforts or mindset of a teacher, within the inflexibility of government policy, or within the fact that the school simply does not have enough teachers and classrooms to support such a large student population. The following ideas must be considered:

- **Cessation of Admitting New Students:** The GOK makes it very difficult for this to indeed be carried out in the school. According to GOK policy, every government school should search the neighboring community weekly and bring in wandering children to the school. This procedure is quite problematic, considering that already with a strength of 300+ and only seven teachers, Chandranagar School is having a difficult time focusing on the education of the children already in the school. Admitting more students, or even working towards making the school “more attractive” for other students should *not* be a priority. The children currently at Chandranagar School are already suffering from the disorganization that results from such large class sizes. It is quite understandable that teachers often waste time or have difficulty teaching classes of over fifty screaming children— it is quite an impossible task, and both the students and the teachers suffer due to it. Simply put, in order for this problem to be reduced, the first step is to stop admitting new students.

- **More Communication Between Teachers:** While the GOK should most likely standardize a procedure in which there is actual working time in the school week designated for planning, this is an unlikelyhood. Thus, in order for the school to better function, teachers within the school itself need to work with one another, share strategies, standardize procedures, and interact with teachers across the district to share valuable information with one an-

other. Teachers are a greatly undervalued profession in society today, which is quite evident due to pressure and lack of salary provided by the GOK. Asha must also consider this fact, and increase the salaries of the Asha-paid teachers in Chandranagar School.

- **Positive Reinforcement for Organized Behavior of Students:** Have students facilitate the classroom organization process. Post the class rules and procedures clearly in the classroom, and make appropriate consequences for children that abuses such procedures. Give students the responsibility of classroom management— use row leaders, noise monitors, and encourage misbehaving children to take notice of their own behavior, and that of others in order to improve.

In all likelihood, an NGO has little impact, resources, or power to really influence these systemic issues within the schools themselves. However, an NGO does have the power to establish long-lasting relationships with the teachers of Chandranagar School, serving as both a resource and base of encouragement for those with vested interests in the school itself. The teachers have to ultimately resolve these issues, however, Asha can play a role in facilitating this process by actively participating in creating networks with teachers, organizing meetings and discussing strategies for better organization, and even serving as a check on the progress of the school by paying close attention to changes in the school over time, and then constructing reasoning and discussions on the resultant growth or decay.

Government of Karnataka

The Government of Karnataka has various broad-based programs that impact Chandranagar School on a daily basis, including the Mid-day Meals, Radio Listen Program, and Akshara Reading Program. The resulting impact of these programs is difficult to track, but the following observations must be noted:

- **Mid-Day Meals:** the Mid-day Meals program certainly provides an incentive for parents to send their children to school— a free meal. However, if these meals are not provided on-time, a great deal of the day is wasted waiting for the food.

- **Radio Listen Program:** this program seems to be interesting to the children, however, it is ineffective if the teachers do not help facilitate activity or if there is no power or bad signal for the program.

- **Reading Program:** children that do not participate in this program often waste the end of the day’s time or serve as a distraction to others participating in the program.



greatly appreciated, fun activity for the children.

The Result of Infrequent or Inconsistent Volunteering

It is clearly very difficult for volunteers with full-time

jobs elsewhere to commit their valuable free time to the government schools. There are a great deal of issues and problems within the school that are seemingly impossible to tackle given Asha's limited resources, time, and bargaining power within the school, and with the SDMC and government officials. However, with the limited time available for committed people that take part in Asha activities, it is possible to develop programs or activities that focus more on the personal development of government school children, while focusing on the complex systemic issues as well.

However, the main point that one must keep in mind is that sustained change will only occur with a consistent and thoughtful commitment by Asha volunteers. It is not only ineffective but a waste of time for volunteers to come to the school irregularly and without plans. Furthermore, the actual learning levels of children and its connection with Asha efforts will be difficult to correlatively study over time; however, if a group or single volunteer makes a weekly commitment at least to a specific goal-oriented idea, these children will indeed reap some benefit from such an effort.

Asha's Influence

In Chandranagar School, Asha for Education's influence has included the following:

- Hired 3 additional teachers: Manjunath, Maunesh, and Siddegowda.
- Maunesh is currently being trained to use educational material on a Linux-based computer. One such computer is currently in Chandranagar School, and five more can be potentially donated to the school. This is a complicated issue, as there is little space for computers in Chandranagar School. Furthermore, one could argue, with literacy and learning levels at the current state, what is the purpose of developing the computer center? Also, is the attractive nature of having computers itself a contributing factor to the push for a center from Chandranagar school teachers? If so, one could argue that there is no need to make the school attractive for more students, being as there is already an excess of students given the current number of teachers and classrooms in the school.
- Asha has built the initial school building, currently not in use at the school. Asha also built a partition dividing the first and fourth standard classrooms.
- Volunteers come periodically to hold various classes— one volunteer teaches VI Std. English once every few weeks, another holds physical training classes a few times a month. Other volunteers visit the school irregularly on Saturdays to play with the children.
- Asha sponsors a yearly school trip and painting competition with the schoolchildren. This seems to be a

Target Areas/Ideas for Volunteers in Brief

1. Teacher Salary Increases

Siddegowda and Maunesh have both petitioned for an increase in their salaries (they receive Rs. 2000/month). Inflation and prices in Bangalore should not be the only reasoning for such a pay raise; the teaching profession should be valued and these teachers should be rewarded better for their consistent and dedicated efforts at Chandranagar School.

2. Petitioning to the Government/SDMC Empowerment

Though a seemingly hopeless proposition, Asha should work with the school and the SDMC to petition for more teachers, the building of new classrooms, and for a compound wall for the school. Furthermore, Asha should focus on SDMC empowerment in order to get the actual Chandranagar District and the parents of the children to tap into their vested interests in the progress of the school. Asha and its volunteers are indeed outsiders, and in order for a sustained change to occur, the people in this specific community should be motivated and informed so that they can improve their school.

3. Devise Consistent Goal-Oriented Programs

A weekly program perhaps focused on storytelling, theatre, math enrichment, etc. can be incredibly effective for the personal development of a child. Such effects may not reach a broad range of children, but if one developed a weekly program in which children were encouraged for example to listen to stories, ask questions, act them out, etc., the interest of a child will peak, and perhaps the motivation to participate actively in such an enjoyable and consistent weekly activity will lead to a more developed sense of personal motivation and participation in the regular classroom, for example.

4. Systemic Improvement

Asha volunteers can use their own skills to hold workshops with teachers that focus on better organization, teacher interaction, or even on accounting training for the HM, for example. Furthermore, it would be quite valuable for Asha volunteers to form relationships with the HM and the schoolteachers, so that everyone can communicate and work with one another in a useful fashion.

Focusing on Enrichment

While the influence of focusing on the systemic problems as an NGO within Chandranagar School is likely to be low, it is perhaps a better idea to focus on an enrichment-based approach for volunteering. Asha volunteers have a great many skills that can be put to use in the schools, while still being fun for both students and volunteers. An emphasis on child development is likely to be successful, as trying to focus on issues that replace or attack the work of teachers is likely to be both ineffective and badly received by the school.

Specific Ideas

- *Theatre*: children love play-acting, and by having weekly theatre workshops, for example, children learn how to express themselves creatively and openly.
- *Dance*: one thing that you will see consistently at Chandranagar School in particular, is that there is no shortage of active dancers, among both girls and boys. Conducting weekly classes teaches self-expression, discipline, and also teamwork. If a child can look forward to a dance class every week, for example, they will also learn the value of practice, a skill that will not only improve a child's performance in this specific task, but will also be an easily transferrable value that can be helpful in the classroom and with schoolwork.
- *Math Enrichment*: there are a multitude of math enrichment activities, programs, and materials that can be easily used with any students in the school. Simple games, such as "Tangrams," logic puzzles, etc., can stimulate the mind in ways that are not readily done in the schoolroom. By using enrichment or supplementary models, teachers will not feel threatened by external work, children will

have fun, and they will also learn skills and ways of thinking that will be helpful to general learning as well. See http://mathforum.org/library/selected_sites/problems_puzzles.elem.html for more ideas.

- Other ideas include: science investigations, gardening, storytelling, geography games, periodic field trips, sports lessons, etc. Volunteers should be motivated to find innovative ways of spending time with children on a consistent basis, perhaps focusing on skills and values that are not always developed specifically in a classroom setting, such as teamwork, personal creativity, discipline, and abstract thinking in subject work, such as science or math, etc.

Specific Ideas

- *Form more lasting and personal relationships with the teachers of Chandranagar School*. Teachers can easily be isolated in their profession, constricted by the daily grind and the government regulations that they must follow day-to-day. However, despite such confinement, it might be helpful for Asha to take a more proactive role in actually forming relationships with the teachers and headmistress of Chandranagar School. Thus, if there are problems, or issues that need solving, at least the members of the school should feel comfortable approaching Asha, using its volunteers as a resource, instead of thinking of Asha as an external group that is unreachable.
- *Focus on SDMC and community empowerment*. The community is a vital resource for the betterment of the school. If Asha pays more direct attention to involving the SDMC and the commu-

nity in its efforts within the school, perhaps these people will be more inclined to take matters into their own hands, and to solve their own problems. Some ideas include: involve the SDMC in assessing the learning outcome of children; inspire SDMC to advocate to the government and BEO (Block Education Officer) for more teachers and more classrooms; educate SDMC on the different programs available from the department of education; sensitize the SDMC to education debates; emphasize regular meetings and training; involve more of the SDMC on supervising the quality of construction and improvement of infrastructure; encourage organized community meetings. See www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/485/2005_Apr-Sept_Update.doc for more ideas and information.





Asha for Education
Bringing hope through education



Conclusions

The value of evaluation in schools has certainly been exposed throughout this investigation process. Overall, through the use of the NIAS method in Chandranagar School, we have found that there is a great disparity in learning levels among the

children. On average, about 60%, are performing at or above the subscribed minimum expected mark. However, the students that fall in the lower 40% are significantly further behind the rest. 90% of II Std. children have difficulty writing letters on their own. 20% of the IV and VII Standard children cannot read. 40% of IV and VII Std. children cannot do basic arithmetic.

Upon observation, there are a great many problems related to the general functioning of the school. In most basic terms, the school does not have an adequate number of classrooms and teachers to support its strength. The school also seems to have little intention to curb enrollment and petition for better infrastructure, let alone more teachers. The SDMC functions almost entirely through the work of one person, and the parents in the school, while perhaps generally interested in their children's education, have shown no

interest in improving the conditions of the school through their own efforts.

Asha for Education, with a better understanding of the learning levels, school functioning, and the problem areas of the school can now devise more effective ideas for a catalyzed change. Using the National Institute of Advanced Studies methodology, evaluations can be done on a regular basis within Chandranagar School, as well as other Asha projects throughout India. With empirical data representing the full status of the learning levels of the children, Asha, the SDMC, and Chandranagar School faculty have ammunition with which to instigate change with the government bureaucracy, for example. With a focus on SDMC empowerment and more sustained efforts, Asha can also better mobilize its forces to make long-lasting impact in the school.

Asha for Education



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