

REPORT

ASHA FOR EDUCATION PROJECT

BANJARA SCHOOL - SCHOOL FOR NOMADIC COMMUNITY

BANJARA BASTI, JODHAWAS, RAMTILA

TEHSIL: - THANAGAJI

DISTRICT: - ALWAR, RAJASTHAN

NOVEMBER 2007 TO APRIL 2008

In the time period of November to April a lot of activities took place in Banjara Community. Children who were initially not interested in studies and other activities started taking it seriously. Their parents used to take their children with them to sell salts and other household materials to another places, realized that education is the most important and necessary for a child's development. It happened after a series of meetings with them. Some children at the near by brick kiln site were also out of school. So on 19-11-07 a meeting with the parents and the manager of that brick kiln was organized in which all the workers and the manager were present. After the meeting **8 children** joined the school. Apart from the meetings with the Banjara community some meetings were also organized with the government officials and the *Sarpanch* of that area regarding the water crisis and for the *patta* (ownership certificate) of the land. The land, where the Banjara community lives is not their land. The most important change that happened is the increase in the percentage of attendance of the children in the school. The teachers taught them in lucid way through song and pictorial chart and through story telling on some occasion like Children's Day, *Holi*, Republic Day etc. Through the story teacher inspired them to learn and to know about the importance of these festivals. Banjara community and their children for the first time host the tri-color in the school premises. For the first time they came to know why we celebrate the 26th January.

As the old session has come to an end an annual examination was held in the school. Before that in the month of December 2007 half yearly examination was held. The result was really very good.

The details of the activities that had been carried out during these six months are as follows:-

Method of teaching:-

Initially the children were taught in very general way. They were encouraged to attend the classes. So the teacher initially taught them easy things. After some times when they started showing their interest in study, teacher started following the syllabus of CBSE and DPEP primary education. The teaching style has been changed and it has got a good response. Now poems replace the songs. Children were taught their lessons through stories and pictures and it found very effective. Children started participating in group discussion on some subjects like why the education is important for us, what do you mean by quality education, child rights etc. Through the group discussion children could come up with their own view on that subject.

During the discussion children were encouraged to ask any questions that they had in their mind. Their time table was followed strictly. In a week they were taught folk songs, dances and some new games. The children were also given orientation on the child labor, child trafficking and other social evils such as child marriage, dowry system etc. that prevail in the society for half an hour in every week. Not only the children but also the community members of Banjara were also included in the meeting/class. Through the community participation the style of social and moral classes has been changed. Classes on drawing were also held in every week. There are meetings with the parents of the children and discussed with them about the importance of hygiene and health. In the class, children were informed about the preventive measures of some of the diseases and about the importance of balanced **environment**.

Examinations will be conducted in every month (written and oral) to assess the progress and to make them more serious towards the study. **Half yearly** examination was taken in the month of December 2007. **Annual examination** was conducted in the month of April 2008. Result was really very good and encouraging.

Meeting with the Banjara Community:-

Banjara community is one of the backward communities in Rajasthan and they were unaware about the importance of education. Through out the year there were different meetings with the community members were held to inform about the importance of education. When they saw changes in the life style and when they realized that their children are more informed about the things, they supported the teachers and the staffs. In the meetings they were also given orientation on importance of good health. Banjara community members both men and women generally consume alcohol and other drugs. They were told about its drawbacks about the consumption of alcohol and drugs. They were also told that their children will learn these bad habits as they first learn from their parents in family. They assured that they will try not to consume alcohol and drugs but they don't promise because it has become their habit. In every meeting there will be some time for discussing about the different **schemes** run for their benefits by the government.

In such a way till date with the help of Bal Ashram staffs and the teacher of the school two women and a man are entitled for the **old age pension**. Even **ration card of six families** were also made with the help of Bal Ashram and the teacher of the school. So now the people living there started trusting the Bal Ashram and they are trying to change their way of life.

In one such meeting with the Banjara community on 4th March 2008, they were informed about the '**National Rural Guaranteed Employment Scheme**'. Activist also helped the people in filling the registration form for the job card. It really gave them an opportunity to live at a place for at least 100 days and they will stay with their children there. So the children will not accompany them to the work place and they will attend the class. Not only they will have a job for 100 days in a year but financially also they will feel more secure. On 17-4-08 a joint meeting of the parents of the children of the Banjara community was organized. The meeting was called to discuss the attendance of the children and to inform the parents about the improvement of their child. In this meeting the activist also asked the community member to look after the school structure and trees of the surrounding area. The community members assured that they will look after the things and took the responsibility.

Meeting with the parents of the out of school children and the manager of the brick kiln:-

There is a brick kiln near by the Banjara Basti (where the Banjara community lives). The of Bal Ashram came to know that there are some children who are not attending the school. He met the manager of the brick kiln and arranged a meeting of the workers on 19-11-07. In that meeting Bal Ashram representative and the teachers informed the parents about the importance of the education in this era. The manager of the brick kiln also addressed the gathering and asked his workers to send their children to the school for a better future. In that meeting activist explained about the issue of child labor and the laws against it. After that meeting about **8 children joined** the school in the middle of the academic session. But after some days the children stopped coming to the school. So on 7th January 2008 another meeting with the workers of the brick kiln was organized. Children from the Banjara School also joined the activist and reached there shouting slogans on the rights of the children- *Har Bachche ka Hai Adhikar, Roti Khel Padhai Pyar, Bharat Padhega, Aage Badhega, Sabko Siksha Ek Saman, Aaj Se Abhi Se* etc. in this meeting children of the Banjara School also addressed the parents of the out of school children. One of the children Master Prahlad Banjara told them that it is the education that gave him confidence to address the gathering. He also told them that due to education he has become more confident and can distinguish between bad and good. He said that he has learnt a lot and can write and read the books and it gives him pleasure. He requested the workers there that they should send their children to the school as education is their fundamental right. They should not snatch their rights and pleasure as they are the parents of these children. After that meeting **5 children joined** the school and till date they are attending their classes regularly. It was the big achievement

Distribution of Shoes and Clothes among the children in Banjara school:-

Children of the Banjara School did not have shoes and woolen clothes. They used to come without sleepers or shoes. So Bal Ashram distributed shoes to 30 Banjara school children on 22 January 2008. On 24th January Bal Ashram also arranged some woolen clothes for the children and it was distributed among the Banjara School children. It was winter season and the children did not have any woolen clothes at that time. The children were excited and their parents were happy. Not only that all the children of the school were also given some more clothes on 12th of April 2008. It also helped in maintaining the retention of the children in the school as some children were not attending the school due to lack of woolen clothes and shoes.

India Action Week (1 February to 7 February 2008):-

India Action Week was organized by the Bal Ashram, Bachpan Bachao Andolan from 1 February to 7 February 2008, to sensitize the people about the child labor and importance of the quality education. During this week many child labors were rescued by the BBA activist from different part of the country. In the Banjara School children were given lesson on the child labor and other social evils. They were informed that many children are away from their rights. On this occasion they were told about the importance of the education and how education can open the way of success in the future. They were motivated to spread the importance of education in the community

Global Action Week:-

This year the National Coalition for Education and Bal Ashram was jointly organized a Global Action Week through out India from 21 April to 27 April 2008. The main aim of this program was as follows-

1. To spread the awareness about the importance of good and qualitative education.
2. To draw the attention of the people towards the out of school children.
3. To practice interesting way of teaching and to give thrust on meaningful education.
4. To draw the attention of the politicians and law makers to make a law on the same.
5. To prepare a quality and interesting syllabus for all the children.

Under this program some of the activities were carried out by the Bal Ashram in the Jaipur and Alwar district villages and schools. In Banjara School, on 23rd April 2008, children and youth of that community were taught a World's Biggest Lesson.

They were given lesson on the importance of good, qualitative and interesting education. During this they were also informed that about 6 million children are still away from their basic rights and working somewhere and about the same number of youth are unemployed. They were also told about the elements which are the basic requirements for quality in education. They were aware about the other social ills like sexual discrimination, poverty, child marriage etc. which prevails in the society. All the children were also told how a good and quality education can be used as a weapon to eradicate these ills from the society. After the lesson children were asked some questions based on the lesson. Children answered most of them confidently. Children and the youths of Banjara community actively took part in this lesson.

Medical Camp for the Children and the Community Member:-

A medical camp was organized on 5-11-07 for the Banjara School Children and the community members. In this camp ANM Smt. Nirupma Devi and Smt. Suman Devi also explained to the community about the preventive measures of some diseases. She also gave some vitamin tablets and medicine to the children and took their blood samples. They distributed some Iron tablets to the women and explained importance of vaccination.

Celebration of Children's Day in Banjara School:-

Children's Day was celebrated in Banjara School on 14th November 2007. It was the first time the children of the Banjara community celebrating the children's day. Before that they were not known about the children's day. They were told why we celebrate the children's day. They were told about Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru's struggle for free India. Children were informed about his love for the children. All the children were told to take lesson from his life. On that day children also arranged a cultural program.

Director Bal Ashram Smt. Sumedha Kailash also visited the Banjara School on that day and spend her time with the children. She told the children story of our first Prime Minister of India and his dream of free India. She informed the community members and the children that after 61

years of independence about six corer children are still suffering and their life is in dark. So he called on the people to come together to fight for the children's right for the better future. She also distributed sweets and toffee to the children.

Republic Day Celebration:-

Republic Day was celebrated on 26th of January 2008 in Banjara School. For the first time in their life children and the community members of Banjara host the Tri color in the school. The head of the community Sri Gopi Banjara with the children host the Tri color. They sang National Anthem and salute the Tri color. They were informed why we celebrate Republic Day. They were also told about their constitutional rights and their duty. At this auspicious moment children also presented colorful cultural program of songs and dance.

Shahid Diwas Observed:-

Shahid Diwas (30th January) was observed in the school. All the children kept silence in the memory of *Rashtriya Pita* (Father of the Nation) and remembered him. Teachers told the children about his struggle for freedom and his thought for the better world. All the children were encouraged to follow his path of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and the Truth.

Holi Celebration:-

Teachers, children and the whole Banjara community celebrated Holi (festival of colors) together. On the eve of Holi children were told about the story of *Prahalad* and why Holi is being celebrated. They were also encouraged to use the natural color as it does not have side effect on the skin.

Apart from these activities children were also given orientation on the life of great personalities and the grate leaders of India and world. This really helped in developing the moral values discipline in them. They also do exercise every day for the good health. On the eve of *Diwali* they were encouraged not to use fire crackers as many children have lost their life in the fire cracker factory during the manufacturing work and it also create sound and air pollution. Children also celebrated *Basant Panchami* in the school and worshiped the Goddess of Knowledge (Saraswati).

Examination:-

At the academic front all the children took their half yearly and annual examinations and on basis that result sheet has been prepared. Result was really encouraging. Some children did outstanding in their paper. They took up the examination of 500 marks (250 marks of half yearly and 250 marks of annual examination). They appeared at the examination of Hindi, English and Mathematics. Papers were set for the both oral and written examination. The percentage of marks that they got in the examination is as follows:-

Total marks: - 500

Total no. of children appeared in examination: - 28 (LKG-15, UKG-13)

Pass: - 27 (LKG-14, UKG-13)

Fail: - 1 (LKG)

L.K.G. STUDENTS:-

Sl. No.	Name	Hindi	Mathematics	English	Marks Obtained	percentage
1	Ashok Singh Banjara	122	122	50	301	60.2
2	Kumari Bimla Bai Banjara	142	138	61	341	68.1%
3	Kumari Chuka Banjara	125	133	52	310	61.4%
4	Kumari Shanti Banjara	147	136	61	344	68.4%
5	Suraj Singh Banjara	97	122	49	268	53.3%
6	Pandu Singh Banjara	115	102	42	259	51.4%
7	Nibu Singh Banjara	146	163	62	371	74.1%
8	Ramesh Chand Banjara	170	179	77	426	85.1%
9	Kumari Indra Banjara	163	168	69	400	80%
10	Kumari Guddi Bai Banjara	123	127	62	312	62.2%
11	Kumari Chand Banjara	118	122	52	292	58.2%
12	Kumari Sapna Banjara	57	82	43	182	36.2%

13	Kumari Charan Banjara	116	137	73	326	65.1%
14	Kumari Maina Banjara	117	137	67	321	64.1%
15	Mahavir Singh Banjara	50	51	32	133	26.3% Fail

U.K.G. STUDENTS:-

Sl. No.	Name	Hindi	Mathematics	English	Marks Obtained	Percentage
1	Prahlad Singh	160	159	65	384	76.4%
2	Guman Singh	146	155	68	359	71.4%
3	Kailash Singh Banjara	118	132	55	305	61%
4	Vikky Banjara	112	117	65	294	58.4%
5	Kumari Kamla Banjara	111	122	65	298	59.3%
6	Pawan Singh Banjara	113	109	61	283	56.6%
7	Pandu Singh Banjara	86	109	53	248	49.3%
8	Kumari Sharda Banjara	90	100	52	242	48.2%
9	Kumari Santos Verma	124	131	71	326	65.10%
10	Kumari Geeta Verma	138	136	77	351	71.1%
11	Mukesh Sharma	102	109	59	270	54%
12	Kumari Durga	111	109	63	283	56.3%

	Verma					
13	Kumari MayaVer ma	86	106	65	257	51.2%

Note: - Total marks obtained in each paper include the marks obtained in oral examination and written examination.

Name of the first three children who scored highest marks in their respective class are as follows:-

In LKG:-

1 Ramesh Chand Banjara 85.1 %

2 Kumari Indra Banjara 80%

3 Nibu Singh Banjara 74.1%

In UKG:-

1 Prahlad Banjara 76.4%

2 Guman Singh Banjara 71.4%

3 Kumari Geeta Verma 71.1 %

Meetings with Government Officials:-

The place where they live has no proper infrastructure like water, road and electricity. Due to lack of water at near by place children usually suffer. They fetch water from about 2 km away. In that respect some meetings were organized and held by the initiative of Bal Ashram activists.

Meeting with the Gram Sarpanch on 30-11-07

A meeting was held with the Gram Sarpanch Sri Lakshman Prasad Sharma and the Secretary Sri Dinesh Sharma to discuss about the water crisis in the Banjara Basti. They informed activist about a scheme called 'Sector Reform Scheme'. This is a special scheme for the drinking water facility under which the community has to bear 10% of the expense and rest of the expenses will bear by the government to establish the drinking water facilities in the community.

Meeting with the Block Development Officer, Thanagazi

A meeting was was organized on 1 December 2008, with the BDO of Thanagazi Sri K. K. Jaimen and the people of Banjara community. In this meeting activist gather information regarding the scheme. Banjara community members collected Rs. 5000 and submitted it to the Gram Panchayat and wrote an application to establish the drinking water facility in the community. But the *Sarpanch* denied giving the receipt of that amount in the name of any Banjara Community people. Sarpanch gave an assurance that he will look into the matter. After some months, on 9th February 2008, activist held a meeting with BDO again and asked them to help. BDO Thanagazi assured that it is in process and very soon they will have a hand pump there.

Meeting with the SDM Thanagazi,

A meeting was held on 11 February 2008 with The SDM, Sri Ramesh Chand Jainth was organized. In the meeting activist narrated the problem of the community in detail and asked for help. He assured the activist that he will look into the matter and he will try his best so that the community member could get the water facility as soon as possible. A press release was also sent regarding the same problem. Activist of Bal Ashram again met BDO and SDM of Thanagazi and enquired about the progress in that matter. BDO Thanagazi said that the Sarpanch has not taken up this issue yet. After that the Banjara community members and the activist decided to meet District Collector of Alwar District. On 26th February 2008 about 10 people of Banjara community together with the Bal Ashram activist visited DC office. But DC was out of station and they met ADM Alwar Sri Om Prakash Bunkar and gave him an application regarding the same. He said that he would write to the BDO Thanagazi about the problem and look into the matter. Application demanding the allocation of the land, signed by the people of the Banjara Community was also sent to the DC. At present the community is living in occupied land. On 6th November 2007 Tehsildar, Patwari, and SDM Thanagazi visited that place where Banjara are living and asked them to vacate the place. They want that that land should be given to them so that they could spend rest of their time at one place.

Visitors:-

Some people from abroad and India visited the Banjara School to know how it works and how the children are doing. Some of the details of the visitors are as follows:-

On 1st of November 2007 Mr. David from USA visited the school and met the children and the Banjara Community members. He interacted with the children and asked their experience about the new life. He also talked to the community members and asked about their life style and how they feel when their children go to the school. All the people and children responded in positive way and told him that they feel proud. Mr. David told them that they should fight together for their rights and all the children should be educated which is the only way that will help them in future. Children and the Banjara community welcomed the guest in their traditional way.

On 24th January 2008 Mr. David visited Banjara School and the community members welcome him. Director Bal Ashram Mrs. Sumedha Kailash was also with him. They talked to the children and inspired them to carry on the education for the better future. On this occasion woolen clothes were also distributed for the school children. On 30th March 2008 founder of Bachpan Bachao Andolan and the President of Global March Sri Kailash Satyarthi, Director Bal Ashram Smt. Sumedha Kailash and the Kids XL representatives Mrs. Lyda and Mrs. Rachida visited the Banjara school and interacted with the children and community. Children welcomed the guests and also presented some colorful program. The guests talked with the children and the community members to know about their life style. Bal Ashram Director and the Founder of BBA asked them to fight together against the social evils like child labor, child marriage etc. they also said the community members to send their child to school regularly. They informed them about the importance of education for the bright future. Bal Ashram Director also distributed some sweets to the children. Some other people from other organization also visited the Banjara School. On 3rd April 2008 some people from an organization Human People to

People visited the Banjara School and interacted with the children. They came here to see how nomadic community children are in the process of mainstreaming.

So over all it was a great year for the children and the teachers. Initially children were less interested in education and were not attending the classes. But after some months they started showing interest in the studies. The result of examination says every thing. New session will start from July 2008. Children have passed their examination with flying colors. Teachers are busy in preparing the new syllabus for them. It is sure that all children will again join the class with full vigor and energy.

Some recent photographs of Banjara School is attached below



