

Visit to VTTRC, July 2014

By Melli Annamalai (Asha-Boston/MIT)

I visited VTTRC as part of my visit to Viveka Tribal School of Learning. VTTRC is a DEd college situated right next to VTCL (this means the location is remote, literally in the middle of the forest). One of its goals is to train students from the local villages to be teachers. This helps build capacity within the community, so that teachers for the local schools don't have to be always recruited from towns and cities that are relatively far away. Two of VTTRC graduates have joined the Vignyana Vahini (mobile science van) project supported by Asha-Boston/MIT. VTTRC is partially supported by Asha-San Diego.

VTTRC had the highest intake of DEd students the last academic year (15 students). JSS college (JSS is a well established institution) had 13 students (both of them can have more students, VTTRC capacity is 20). This is a sign that the quality of the course is considered good.

Each room is designed with a subject in mind. For example the Science room has walls covered with things relating to Science. The Social Science room has pictures and models of History, Geography, etc. Everything in each room is designed by the students, typically as projects in previous years. Students move from room to room as they study. I particularly liked that everywhere was an emphasis on the local context and local environment. For example, in the Social Science room they had a project on the Geography of an unusual rocky "Gudda" (hillock) in Madapura, a nearby village*.

Some of the teachers have visited the US as part of an exchange program.

A recent initiative is the "budding teachers" program where the teachers teach in local schools as part of the DEd training. For now they are doing this in SVYM schools (VTCL, VSOE). They mentioned a few times how helpful this was to the schools, to have the extra staff.

Employment of graduates: Graduates have been absorbed in local private schools, though students would like to be in government school jobs.

Mr. Mahesh, the principal of VTTRC is very keen on this emphasis on the local context. I think this is very valuable. Often in rural schools and institutions I feel that the curriculum followed inside the classroom is so removed from the world right outside. It has no relation to the students' lives. If the DEd students get trained in this environment they will carry the local emphasis with them to the schools they teach at. Mr. Mahesh wants to create a TLC (Teacher Learning Center) with localized materials. This center will function as a interface between the DEd college and neighboring schools, with the goal of addressing the theory-practice disconnect, as highlighted by the (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education).



A classroom

Vivekananda Teacher Trining & Resrch Center
Hosahalli (Job placement from placement call)

Sl No	Student Name	Institute Name
1.	Parvati	G.H.P.S. Beeramballi
2.	Nagarathna	G.H.P.S. Beeramballi
3.	Nigraju	VILD Mysore
4.	Dharmalingam	S.V.Y.M Project Jayapura
5.	Shivakumar	Ramakrishana vidyashale Shivanahalli, Bangalore.
6.	Sannakalla	Ramakrishana vidyashale Shivanahalli, Bangalore.
7.	Jayalaxmi	Samhita Academy, Bangalore.
8.	Pramoda	Samhita Academy, Bangalore.
9.	Mahadeva	Vijnana vahini, S.V.Y.M.
10.	Shobha	Vijnana vahini, S.V.Y.M.
11.	Suresha	Vijnana vahini, S.V.Y.M.
12.	Chandru	Community Radio, S.V.Y.M.
13.	Manjula	Community Radio, S.V.Y.M.
14.	Gowrisha	Community Radio, S.V.Y.M.
15.	Neelavati	Community Radio, S.V.Y.M.
16.	Guruprasad	V.S.O.E. S.V.Y.M.Saragur.
17.	Mamata	V.S.O.E. S.V.Y.M.Saragur.
18.	Pallavi s.s	VILD Mysore
19.	Susheelamma	V.M.H. Kenchanahalli.

Recent employment of graduates



Creative work by students in the Literature room



Local Geography in the Social Science room



The DEd college, with the principal Mr. Mahesh



In the Staff room (Chris was visiting with me)

**Why does 'local' matter?*

The curriculum today is completely removed from rural and tribal life. As part of the curriculum they study about light, electricity, magnetism without drawing any connection to life around them – farming, gathering forest produce, or anything else. They study no local geography or history. There is no discussion on weather patterns locally, what impact it has had on local agriculture, etc.

The fact that the curriculum is so removed from their daily life can also make studying challenging – concepts are abstract and unfamiliar. This is why I am a great believer in connecting what students study in classrooms to the local context.