



Gramin Shiksha Kendra

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Annual Report 2009-10

Index

1. Introduction	2
2. Area Profile	2
3. Schools	
A. Uday Pathshala Jaganpura	3
B. Uday Pathshala Bodal	4
C. Urban School	6
D. Uday pathshala, faria	7
4. New Initiatives at the school	9
5. KILOL	9
6. Training and Capacity Building	10
7. Future Plans	11

1. Introduction:

Gramin Shiksha Kendra (GSK) was formed by locals and external professionals in 1995 to provide relevant good quality education to the community. The organization is registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, Rajasthan 1958. It remained on the Drawing Board for 8 years because the group felt it lacked the skills needed for running schools. The organization became active only in September 2003 when the right combination of talent, enthusiasm and preparedness was available.

GSK has been working on elementary education in Sawai Madhopur district since 2003. GSK is working towards demonstrating its idea of quality education to the community so that they are *able to demand quality education from the State*. GSK defines 'community' as the 'parent community' with whom we work and whose children study in our schools but also the 'education community' comprising government school teachers and school administration.

2. Area Profile



Gramin Shiksha Kendra works in two blocks (Sawai Madhopur and Khandar) of the district of Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan. Sawai Madhopur in east Rajasthan is best known for Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. It is also one of the most backward districts of the state, especially in terms of education, industry and infrastructure. With the creation of the Tiger Reserve the local communities were affected the most as their grazing and other rights were restricted. There are two major communities - the Gurjars, who traditionally rear animals and Meenas - a Scheduled Tribe, but basically agriculturists. Tourism was meant to offset some of the losses that resulted from the restrictions from the creation of the national park, but it never happened. Tourism is dominated by outsiders and benefits to the local community, especially the rural community are negligible. That leaves few options apart from agriculture.

3. Schools

Uday, Jaganpura

Uday Jaganpura is the first school that Gramin Shiksha Kendra initiated in June 2004. It is located about 15 kilometers from the district headquarter of Sawai Madhopur.



This was also the first community to accept the idea of a school. The community supported in several ways – they identified the land for the school and constructed a shed for the school. They enthusiastically sent their children to the school. After keenly watching the functioning of the school, they got the 5 acre plot of land that they had identified for the school registered in the name of the GSK.

Currently, it has 183 children – 95 girls and 87 boys and 10 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:18. The school is quite well equipped with 8 rooms, a library, electricity, enough space to play, tap water and 8 toilets. The entire school is also enclosed in a boundary wall. The average attendance over the past year was 83 per cent.

The community has been very responsive in sending their children to the school, attending meetings and demanding the progress report of children and is also very keen in understanding and questioning the teaching methods and other activities at the school. Despite this interest, we have not been able to form a school advisory committee - there are several reasons for this – most important among these the community's inability to agree on membership.

This school is funded by Asha and Vibha Trusts.

Uday, Bodal

Uday Bodal is the second school that Gramin Shiksha Kendra initiated in July 2006. It is located about 20 kilometers from the district headquarter of Sawai Madhopur.



This school serves the community of two villages – Bodal and Mordungri. Mordungri is in the buffer area and has been slated for rehabilitation since 1972. It has always been denied any development because of its unsure status. The communities were very keen to have an Uday school in their village and were quite disappointed that the first school had not been opened there. Despite many attempts they could

not find any suitable land. They decided to demarcate a part of their pasture for the school. Having decided, they camped in our office till the time we did not agree to open the school in their pastureland!

Currently, it has 140 children – 68 girls and 72 boys and 6 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:23. The school is quite well equipped with 10 rooms, a library, electricity on the way, enough space to play, hand-pump and 4 toilets. The entire school is also enclosed in a boundary wall. The average attendance over the past year was 75 per cent.

Uday Bodal ran for almost three years under two large banyan trees with a main road between them. The community made several attempts to find alternative land. GSK tried to work with government so that we could run the existing government school jointly. Nothing worked out.

The only land that was available in the village was a two acre piece belonging to a Mr. Amit Sankhala (whose father, Late Shri Kailash Sankhala, was the first Chief Wildlife Warden of Rajasthan). The children and community wrote to him seeking permission to use his land. In March 2009, after several rounds of discussions, Mr. Amit Sankhala and his family decided to grant us permission to run the school on the land along with the existing buildings. This move meant that the children could study under the banyan trees as an option and not because of a necessity.

The current status is GSK has a 3 year lease to run the school on the land. Mr. Sankhala visited the school and was reassured to see the land being put to good use – he made a verbal commitment to the community that he would not ask the school to move from there.

This school has a very keen school advisory committee which is elected by the villagers for one year. The elders decided the young should take the responsibility and therefore most of the members are young boys of the village. This school is funded by Asha and Vibha Trusts.



Uday, Urban

The urban school also called Uday is the third school that Gramin Shiksha Kendra initiated in July 2007. It is located in the district headquarter of Sawai Madhopur.



This rationale for setting up this school was to present this model of alternative education to the urban middle class. This was done with the belief that the major change in society happens in the middle class.

This is the only Uday School where a fee is charged. This is because it caters to the children of middle class families. It is currently partially subsidized by GSK but the ultimate plan is to make it into a self sustaining model.

Currently, it has 40 children – 22 girls and 18 boys and 2 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:20. The school is quite well equipped with 5 rooms, a library, electricity, enough space to play (in the park opposite the school), drinking water and 2 toilets. In addition, the school has hired auto-rickshaws to transport children. The school has the basic requirements but the rented accommodation in the residential housing colony it is located in is not the best location for a school to be in. The average attendance over the past year was 87 per cent.

The school has an advisory committee comprising the parents. It meets every month to monitor the progress of children, needs of the school etc. This year the members discussed the budget of the school and decided that the fee charged from them should be increased in order to sustain the school. This was most unexpected and gave us the confidence to continue the school.

Uday, Faria

Uday Faria is the newest school that Gramin Shiksha Kendra initiated in July 2009. It is located about 40 kilometers from the district headquarter of Sawai Madhopur.



This school serves the community of two villages – Faria and Katar and their hamlets.

Currently, it has 120 children – 61 girls and 59 boys and 7 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:17. Uday, Faria is located about 3 kilometers away from the main village. The community has identified 5 acres of land and part of it is registered in the name of GSK. The school is quite well equipped with 5 enclosures, a library, enough space to play, hand-pump and 1 toilet. The entire school is also enclosed in a boundary wall. The average attendance over the past year was 75 per cent.

This community ownership of this school is very high. The time from when the idea originated to the actual setting up of the school took almost 18 months, but it was time well spent. Many people from the village visited the other Uday schools both individually and as a group. They then identified land for the school and began the process of allotment. One person also committed to donate his land (which was a part of the identified land), and *then* the community members came to the office and asked us to open a school.

After this there were several rounds of meetings and discussions with the community. In the earlier two schools even though a majority of the community members wanted the school but there *were* some sections, albeit small, who opposed the school for one reason or other. This was not the case with the Uday Faria. This was a decision of the entire community. Even though the school is situated quite far from the habitation, it is still this school that has the most regular community meetings at the school.

Uday Faria is funded by the Yatra Foundation; their funding commitment is not only to Gramin Shiksha Kendra but to the community also. The MoU was signed between GSK, Yatra Foundation and Village Committee.



4. New Initiatives at the schools

Special Emphasis to Literature and creative writing: The teachers of all the schools had been raising their concern about the creative writing skills of both children and teachers. A plan was made to improve the writing skills of both. The children and teachers have started a monthly magazine – **Morange**. **Morange** provides a platform to teachers and children to express themselves. Creative writing and art activities are carried out regularly in all the four schools. A team of teachers and children select from these works from all the four schools and publish in **Morange**. Regular workshops with teachers and children are conducted to improve the writing skills and develop interest in reading. This team has established association with quite a few noted writers of the country. The works of children are now published in magazines like **CHAKMAK**, **Anurag**, **Vimarsh**, **Nai Dunia**, **Jna Satta**.



5. KILOL: The annual function of all the UDAY Pathshalas “KILOL” was organized this year at UDAY Pathshala Bodal. The theme of the function this year was local culture. All the teachers were present in local attire. Men in *dhoti kurta* and women in traditional *ghagra lugari*. Apart from exhibiting the practices in the school, various local traditional sports programmes were organized. Teachers, children and community members presented songs, dances of local Meenas and Gujars of this area.



Teachers performing Dangal (Storytelling form)

6. Training and Support

1. **Teacher's training:** The Annual Training for new teachers for new teachers of GSK was held from 6th May -30th June 2009. The training was conducted for 15 new teachers to be appointed in different schools of the organization.



2. **Workshops:** Regular capacity building workshops are held for teachers. Earlier we used to have fortnightly workshops of two days. These workshops were changed to weekly. One day workshops now held every week on Saturdays. These weekly workshops are focused on creative writing, difficult concepts and reporting. Three parallel workshops are held every Saturday on these concepts for pre-primary, primary and upper primary. During last one year two quarterly workshops were held, one in October at Sawai Madhopur and the second at Ranchi in December. Apart from this a 30 days summer workshop was organized in from 1st -30th June 2009. Curriculum for pre primary was made in the workshop. The curriculum for primary sections was also review. The October workshop was focused mainly on understanding different concepts at pre primary, primary and upper primary levels, where as the December workshop is an occasion for all teachers to spent some time together at a different location of the country. We also try to get an exposure to a different culture. This year the December workshop was organized at Ranchi. XISS (Xavier Institute of Social Services) hosted us.

7. Future Plans

1. **Vistaar:** It is high time we start working on the next level as planned at the time of establishment of the UDAY Pathshala, i.e. the outreach programme. The objectives for the next level are :
 - To establish 5 Resource Centers (schools) in Sawai Madhopur and Khandar blocks each working with 20 to 25 schools in the area. Two new Resource Schools will be initiated; one in the northern part of the Khandar block – perhaps in Khandar and the other in the extreme southern part – perhaps in Lahsoda.
 - Through the Resource Schools, work with the communities and schools in the area to improve the quality of education in the area.

And the methodology will focus on three distinct areas:

- Strengthening Uday schools as Resource Schools
- Working with the community
- Working with the other schools

Although the major concern for us to generate funds for the above activity, but we intend to start the work as per the plan.

8. Our Partners :

1. Asha Trust, USA
2. Vibha Trust, USA
3. Yatra Foundation, Australia
4. Education Development Center, USA