

Annual Report 2006-07

To support, strengthen and popularize the idea of child-centric innovative education system through endeavors of quality in education so that communities start demanding the same from the existing education providing structures



Gramin Shiksha Kendra

57, Patal Nagar, Ranthambhore Road, Sawai Madhopur,

Rajasthan Phone/Fax: 07462-223449, Email: graminswm@gmail.com

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Gramin Shiksha Kendra

Shikshan mein Gunvat-ta (Quality in Education)

Preface

Gramin Shiksha Kendra has been running UDAY Samudayik Pathshala, Jaganpura (Khawa) since July 2004. In July 2005, we have, on the request of the community of Bodal, Mordungri established the second UDAY Samudayik Pathshala at Bodal. GSK is slowly but surely growing to meet the challenges that it set for itself. We have come a long way since August 2004 when GSK was activated as an organisation. Beginning with goodwill from the community as our major resource, we are now beginning to sense a stability in our functioning. The growth of the organisation is linked with the growth of our schools. Uday Samudayik Pathshala began as a thatched structure. We have now built four pucca classrooms for our primary section; from 60 children, we are now working with 225 children; from a three-member team, we are now a 14 –member organization and we have made a strong field-presence in the district as well as in the state. Most importantly GSK has been able to practice its pedagogical principles in true sense in the schools and the glimpse of the positive impact is visible in the schools.

The current financial year has a special significance for we have started to consolidate our pedagogical practices, developed some school-infrastructure, introduced new subjects in the school, initiated a suitable outreach programme (**Vistaar**) and have been able to develop some positive networking.

The current Annual Report is an attempt to capture all the regular activities, new initiatives and developments during the year.

Introduction

Gramin Shiksha Kendra¹ was set up with the belief that in order to have a more equitable society, there is a need to provide access to good quality education to all children. The idea originated after spending time in the area, talking to the people and visiting the schools. Even in the early nineties, when the idea originated, it was obvious that people saw education as a possible way out of their current life. It was the poor education that the government system offered that kept people away from schools. Visits to schools and interactions with children and their parents indicated that they were not at all happy with the status of the government schools where the school environment was not encouraging and the academic achievements were abysmal. The community could not articulate in clear terms what they were looking for in an education system but could provide enough indicators to develop a vision. To be fair, their exposure to any other kind of education system was also absent. What was apparent to them was that there was a difference in the 'end products' of rural government schools, urban government schools and private schools. This noticed difference is reflected in the increase in the number of private schools and reducing enrolment rates in the government schools.

The vision of GSK therefore is to demonstrate to the community an alternative model of child-centred education so that they are in a position to demand quality education from the government; it is to demonstrate the same to the government system so that they are in a position to appreciate the impact of an alternative approach on the children, especially in terms of attendance, academic achievements and retention levels.

The mission of GSK is to have in the coming ten years 100 schools in Sawai Madhopur and Khandar provide good quality education to children

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

¹ Gramin Shiksha Kendra is registered under Societies Registration Act, 1958 (Rajasthan Act Number 28) and its registration number is **51/Sawai Madhopur/95-96**. The organization is also registered with Income Tax with its PAN Number **AAATG8963C** and TAN Number **JDHG06812B**.

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.

I Our Programmes

1. Uday Pathshalas

A. Uday Pathshala Jaganpura



The third session of the Uday Samudayik Pathshala, Jaganpura began on 1st July 2006. This academic year the number of children had risen to 160 from 120 last year and many more parents wanted their children enrolled. We had to refuse the community and put them on a waiting list as our resources are limited. We also had cases of a few dropouts, 3 girls who had been regular in the school, dropped out at the start of the session. Efforts are being made by

the teachers to bring them back to the school but the chances seem bleak, as they have been engaged in household chores and agricultural activities. The session started with seven teachers and 1 support staff, for 160 children divided in seven different groups. In the month of September one teacher left us (on personal grounds) and we had to re adjust the groups thereby reducing the number of groups to six.

B. Uday Pathshala Bodal

The second Uday Samudayik Pathshala was started at Bodal in Dumeda Panchayat. Bodal is a small village on the periphery of the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve mostly inhabited by Gurjars and small percentages of Bairwas and Meenas. We had been



talking to community members of different villages in the Dumeda Panchayat about the school, but the demand from the community in Bodal was very strong. Children from two villages- Bodal and Mordungari (a village inside the reserve forest)

come to the school. At present, there are 74 children in the age group of 4-9 years and three teachers at the school. The school is being run under a tree. The community is trying hard to get a piece of land allotted for the school by the government.

C. New Initiatives at the schools

Extension of the art education:

We have never seen fine arts or performing arts as 'extra-curricular' activities. We were keen to include these in our curriculum since inception but lacked the financial and human resources to do so. During the period under review, we have been able to include Carpentry,



Pottery and Theatre as part of the school curriculum for all children. The carpentry and pottery classes are being run by the part-time Resource Persons. We have however been able to recruit a full time teacher for theatre.

We are in the process of developing the curriculum for each of these subjects for all levels. With the presence of a full time teacher, we have made greater progress in theatre as compared to carpentry and pottery.

Teaching at Upper Primary section: From this session four of our children, graduated to Upper Primary section. In the start of the session, we faced some difficulties in teaching

the upper primary section. During this period, learning from the past experiences, we planned and executed the teaching in the section in sync with the goal of teaching in Upper Primary section. We have initiated the work of development of subject wise spiral of subject-matter content for the Upper Primary section. We propose to recruit separate teachers for the section from the coming academic session.

D. Capacity Building of Teachers

Workshops: Regular fortnightly workshops are being conducted since April 2006 (22 till April 2007). The teachers present the report of the activities done in last 15 days and the work plan for next 15 days. These workshops are also the forum of discussions on academic, personal and administrative matters. Teachers also present the innovative methods of teaching and new TLM in the workshop and the team of teachers approve/disapprove the ideas after long discussions.

Winter Workshop: The winter workshop for this year was organized from 26th December 2006 to 1st January 2007. We planned to hold the workshop in the campus of an organization called Urmul Marusthali Bunkar Vikas Samiti, Phalaudi. Apart from being a workshop where we discussed the action plan of the organization in coming 10 years, it was also an opportunity for all the team members to spend some time of leisure together. We took out 2 days to visit places like Jaisalmer and Jodhpur.

E. Infrastructure development

School Building: We are getting closer to having our own building to run the school in Jaganpura. The community generated funds to make a *kuttcha* boundary wall on the school land. A mud wall has been made on half of the land. The remaining work could not be done as the rains stopped (for this kind of boundary wall, rain is essential to soften the soil). If we put a financial value to the work – then it worth Rs 37,000 but the social value of the work surpasses the financial value. To us, this wall is an indicator of greater acceptance of our work and approach by the community and efforts to quantify it would be an insult to the spirit with which the construction began.

Last year, we had drawn up plans for a school building with the help of Development Alternatives, New Delhi. This year we were able to begin construction of four classrooms of 15X20 sq. feet began at the school in June 2006. The estimated cost for the construction is Rs. 1,20,000. We plan to generate this from local contribution, contributions from friends of Gramin Shiksha Kendra and community members.

2. Vistaar (The outreach Programme)

Vistaar is an initiative of Gramin Shiksha Kendra to support the process of formation of a teachers' collective and facilitate the process of qualitative improvement in selected

government schools of the district. The project was initiated in the month of June 2006 as a joint initiative of Gramin Shiksha Kendra, Save the Children, Finland and Department of Education, Government of Rajasthan. All the three parties had quite a few meetings for coming up to an understanding for the Memorandum of Understanding.

The project has not taken off at the ground level for several reasons. There were ideological differences between Gramin Shiksha Kendra and Save the Children, Finland which are being sorted out.

3. Community Initiatives

- A. **Kilol:** The annual function-KILOL of Gramin Shiksha Kendra was celebrated as an “Integrated” activity where the children’s work was presented and guest children had the opportunity to draw, paint, play as well. The children and community members from at least 10 villages surrounding Uday Pathshala participated in the event. Government officials, representatives of district education department, representative of PRIs (Sarpanchs), government school teachers, private school teachers and children also encouraged us by their participation.



For us the annual function is the occasion where Gramin Shiksha Kendra demonstrates its pedagogy to all its stakeholders. It also presented a glimpse of the educational activities being done in the UDAY Pathshala. This year, we

especially invited district education department officials keeping in mind our new initiative of working with government schools as part of the Vistaar project where Uday Samudayik Pathshala will be one of the resource schools.

The most encouraging part of the initiative was the significant attendance of the women from nearby villages. Besides, youth from different villages participated in the programme and three friendly cricket matches with the community members and the team of GSK was organized. It was a joyful event for the team.

- B. **Community Theatre Group:** We have initiated the formation of a theatre group of youth in Rawal village. The theatre teacher at the school has been helping them understand the basics and minute details of acting, plays, script etc. The idea is to promote creative activities amongst the youth and expression of their thoughts.

4. Training and Support



five were new and two were the old teachers.

A forty-five days induction-training programme of teachers was organized in collaboration of SCF from 17th May 2006 to 1st July 2006. This was training for teachers of partners of SCF working in different districts of Rajasthan. The total number of participants in the training was 22 (15 were from the partners of SCF and seven teachers from GSK also participated. Out of these seven,

II Future Plans

1. Urban School

We plan to initiate an urban school for fee-paying children in Sawai Madhopur town 2007-08 academic session. The objective of starting such a school is manifold. We would like to demonstrate the pedagogy of Uday Pathshalas in the urban area. It is our belief that people in urban areas; especially in small towns like Sawai Madhopur do not have any options if they want 'progressive' education for their children. We also believe that changes in society are led largely through the middle class and we should therefore work with them as well. We would like the people of the town to be involved in the initiatives of the organization. If the venture proves successful, then in the long-term we see it as a possible way to financially support our work in rural areas.

2. Research

We plan to have a research and documentation wing in the next year. We have in fact begun to review our own work. The major objective is to understand and keep a track on the processes we adopt towards achieving our goals in order to strengthen our own programmes as well as share them with others. We would also like to understand the processes involved in other initiatives in the country and make them our learnings as well.

The first two studies that we propose to take up are

- *Revisiting the pedagogical principles and teaching-learning processes at UDAY*
- *Developing a comprehensive indigenous approach for Upper Primary Education including subject-content, teaching-learning materials and teaching methodologies.*