

Introduction

On 8th December 2016, we a group of teachers from Mahatma Education Society visited the following schools:

1. RaigadZillaParishad School Tilore
2. Nagar Parishad School, No.7, Pen
3. Government Asharm School Varavne (boarding School for Adivasi and tribals)
4. SubhadvabMahadeoPatilMadhyamikVidyalaya Pen
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The very purpose of the visit was to assess the needs, problems and difficulties faced by the students and teachers of government, Adivasi and tribal schools. It was also aimed at to find out, how various government policies and schemes were implemented, its effectiveness and the real outcomes.

Team members:

Nagar Parishad School, No.7, Pen

This school is managed by the Pen Nagar Parishad. There were 95 students in the school from grade one to seven. There were five teachers in this school including the principal.

Students

Most of the students were from economically weaker sections of the society. They were mostly the children of workers, labourers, fishermen, vendors etc. Some of the students resided on the streets and were homeless. Most of the children had to assist in the work done at home and also in the family occupation.

Parents

Almost all parents are illiterate and not able to contribute substantially to their children's education.

Teachers

We saw a group of hard working and dedicated teachers. They tried to maintain the school with the little resources they had. They even went door to door to collect funds for the running of the school and its maintenance. Besides teaching they also conducted various activities like sports, games, plays, painting, and decoration of classrooms and so on. They

took special interest and pain to maintain records, making charts and keeping the school clean and tidy.

The biggest challenge the school faces is the shortage of teachers. The sad thing is that, a single teacher has to teach two or three classes simultaneously. The teachers also have to spend much time in clerical work because no separate appointment has been made. This affects the teaching.

School Infrastructure

The school has a fencing wall and basic infrastructure. Even though it has basic infrastructure, due to deficiency of fund, man power and poor management of funds and resources, the school building is not maintained properly. Some of the class rooms have no doors or have decayed doors, walls were not painted, toilets had no water, there was no water tank to collect and store the municipal water and no wash basins were fixed. We saw the children themselves filling the water from the well. Therefore there was no proper drinking water for the children. Either they had to manage themselves with a bottle of water they bring from home for the entire day or drink the contaminated water from the tube well. The small courtyard of the building was use as the playground.

Teachers and students had no lockers and cupboards to keep their books and belongings. Since there were no benches the students had to sit on the floor. Though the school had two computers there was no internet connection.

Mid- day meal

There is no officially appointed person to cook mid-day meal. A local woman prepares the food. Teachers take special care of hygienic aspects during the meals. They insist he children to bring hand wash instead of chocolates during the birthday celebrations. Even though there is no provision for the green vegetables in the ration, teachers take special initiatives to include some green vegetables in the menu.

Interviews

RaigadZillaParishad School Tilore

This school is managed by RaigadZillaParishad. There were thirty students and all of them were from the Adivasi community. The school has classes from grade one to four and has only two teachers. In the beginning there was some kind of resistance from the school authorities later on they allowed as to meet the children and visit the school.

Students:

There were thirty Adivasi students enrolled in the school but only twelve of them were present. They belong to the migrating Adivasi tribes. The school has full attendance during the monsoon and after the monsoon the parents of the children start migrate one place to another in search of job therefore the children also accompany them and they are not able to attend the school

Parents

Almost all the parents are illiterate and belong to the nomadic tribes. After the rainy season, they go from one place to another in search of job. Most of them work in coal mines, sand digging, fishing and so on.

Teachers

There were only two teachers to manage and teach the classes from grade one to four. Students of two grades are kept in a single classroom and a single teacher teaches both the grades simultaneously. During our visit to the school there was only one teacher present.

Infrastructure

The classrooms are ventilated and clean. There are only two classrooms for all four grades. Principal has a separate cabin. There is only one toilet for the entire school. There is no fence for the school campus.

The sad picture was the electricity meter was taken away and the supply was disconnected as the electricity bill was not paid. The annual grand for the school by the government for the maintenance and stationary is Rs. 10000/ only, which is not sufficient to pay the bills and other expenses

Mid-day meal

A small shed was made with tin sheet to cook the food. There was no gas connection and the food is made on fire wood. The government supply rice and three types of dal. The diet is incomprehensive and less in quantity. Two ladies from the nearby village cook the food, clean the school and fill water.

Problems

After the primary education most of the children stop going to school because there are no middle or high schools nearby. The children have great desire to continue their studies but as the parents are illiterate and nomadic they are not in a position to help the children to continue their education.

Only text books are given by the government, so one of the NGOs (Child Future India) provides note books and stationary to the children. There were no sports facilities in the school. There was no proper drinking water and common water tank for the washroom. There were no computers or internet connection.

Interviews

SubhadvabMahadeoPatilMadhyamikVidyalaya Pen

This is a private, aided school. It has students from grade five to ten. There are nine teachers including the principal. There are total 174 students.

Student

There are 80 girls and 94 boys in the school. Seventy per cent of them are from tribal community. The biggest challenge faced by the teachers is the absenteeism of the students. The reason for the absenteeism is that most of the parents are nomadic and they move from one place to another in search of job and in their absence children do not come to school or they accompany their parents.

Parents

Most of the parents are illiterate and from nomadic tribes. They are not bothered about their children's education.

Teachers

We saw a good team of teachers take extra effort in preparing students for SSC board examinations. For the last academic year the first rank holder secured 83% of marks and the overall result was 87%. Teachers also use smart classrooms and computers. The government provides only the salaries, so the teachers contribute Rs.500 each, every month to meet other expenses.

Problems

Following are some of the problems faced by the school:

Government pays only the salaries for the teachers and no fund is given for the maintenance of the school and for the other expenses. Due to the deficiency of the fund they lack facilities like science lab, lab materials, apparatus and furniture. Class rooms all were filled with discarded materials and waste. Absenteeism of the students is another problem the school faces. There is no playground. Even the trustees were seems to be very passive and least bothered about the school and its development.

Government Secondary Ashram School, Varavne, Pen

This is a boarding school for Adivasi children. There are 415 students in the school. When we reached school to get some information about the school there was a kind of resistance from the school management and the teachers until we could find a known teacher. The principal was absent and other teachers were a little tensed and worried about the purpose of our visit. This is a fully government aided boarding school. There are students from grade one to ten.

Students

All the students are from Adivasi/ tribal communities. There are 231 boys, 184 girls and 27 day boarders. All the children are from economically backward families and their parents are nomads. These students are good in sports but they have no playground and other facilities. Most of the children were not able to speak Hindi or Marathi. They spoke only in their tribal languages.

Parents

They are illiterate, nomadic and tribal.

Teachers and staff

Most of the teachers and the supporting staff stay near by the school or inside the campus itself. There are twelve teachers including the principal. There is a rector for the hostel who is the head of the hostel and two wardens, one for boys' hostel and another for the girls' hostel. There are five cooks, four helpers and a watchman.

Infrastructure

The school infrastructure is very pathetic, the walls were rough and not plastered, roofs were decayed and damaged, and floors were patchy and uneven. The students have to sit down on the floor and attend the classes and it was also their resting place. They were not

provided with mattresses to sleep. The life of the students seems to be pathetic and miserable. The kitchen and the premises were filthy and dirty. There were only eight toilets for the entire hostel and were dirty and unhygienic. There was no play ground or any recreational facilities for the children.

Problems

Even though the school is a boarding school the results were very poor. The highest score for last year's SSC examination was just 59%. There were no computers, sports and other recreational facilities for the children. The entire campus is not maintained properly. We have seen that children themselves clean the places. There are no supporting staffs for the maintenance. Though the construction of a separate school building is already completed because of governmental disinterest and lack of initiation, children are kept in this filthy place.