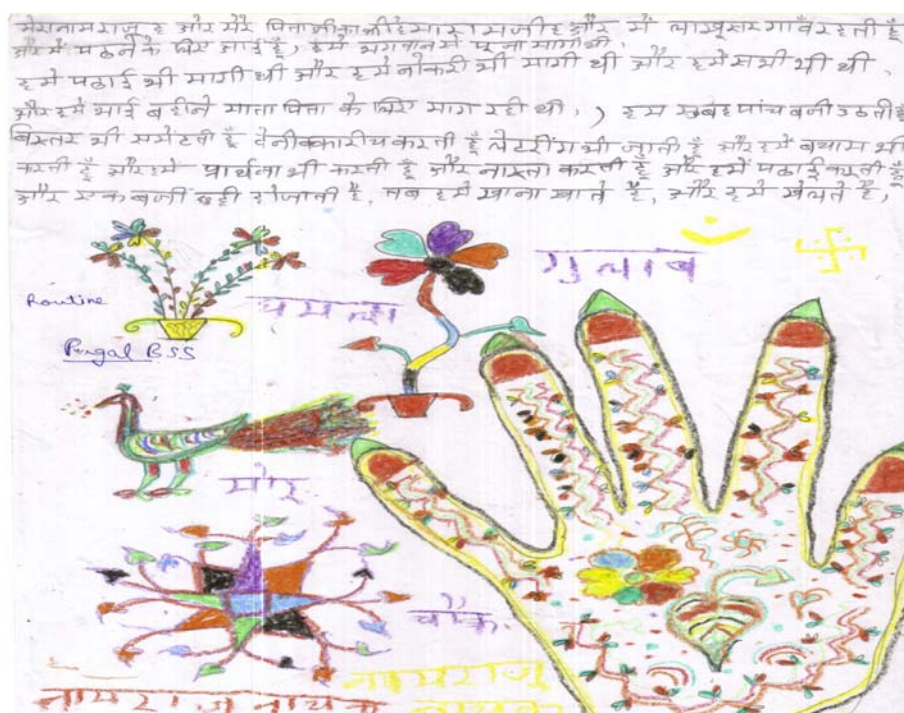


# BALIKA SHIKSHAN SHIVIR, LOK JUMBISH



Report of an external review

Study commissioned by DFID, India



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The views expressed in this report are that of the authors and not of DFID, India or Lok Jumbish Parishad, Government of Rajasthan.

Vimala Ramachandran  
Educational Resource Unit  
31 December 2003

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# Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
DETAILED REPORT	1
Locating BSS in the context of girls education in Rajasthan:	1
Table 1: Girls Age 6-14 Years Attending School by Residence	1
Exhibit 1: Condensed residential programmes for girls	3
Objectives of this review:	3
Methodology:	4
Sample Selection:	4
Table 2: Sample BSS covered in the present study	5
Table 3 Profile of BSS Covered:	5
Enrolment:	5
Table 4: Enrolment and attendance:	6
Infrastructure, facilities, health and hygiene:	6
Table 5: Infrastructure and facilities:	7
Box 1: Health check-up and first aid	8
Table 6: Health and hygiene:	9
Retention and completion:	10
Table 7: Completion status of Balika Shikshan Shivir, 2002-03	10
Enrolled	10
Table 8: Results of the terminal examinations	11
Profile of BSS students:	11
Table 9: Age-wise break-up of girls (from registers)	11
Box 2: Sarvar from Pugal	12
Table 10: Caste / community break-up of children (from register)	12
Profile of teachers:	13
Table 11: Profile of teachers	13
Training of teachers:	14
Box 3: Teachers on training	14
Teaching and learning:	15
Table 12: Time allocated for completion of each level	15
Box 4: How children learn? What teachers say...	16
Classroom Processes	17
Seating arrangements:	17
Language	17
Box 5: Teaching language	18
Mathematics	18
Box 6: Teaching mathematics	19
Teaching learning processes:	19
Continuous assessment:	20
What and how much are they learning?	21
Mathematics	21
Table 13: Performance in Mathematics	22
Exhibit 2: Overall camp-wise outcomes, Mathematics	24
Exhibit 3: Performance of children in mathematics competencies	24
Language	25
Table 14: Performance in Language	25
Exhibit 3: Overall camp-wise performance in language	27
Exhibit 4: Performance of children in language competencies	27
Factors that explain better learning outcomes in some camps:	28
‘Incidental’ gains: non-cognitive outcomes:	29



What the girls studying in BSS say:	30
Box 7: Notes from Focus Group Discussions	30
What former BSS students say	31
What parents say...	31
Box 8: The situation in tribal areas	32
What teachers say...	32
What LJ functionaries say...	32
Box 9: Views of LJ functionaries	32
What “community leaders” say...	33
Box 10: One step forward many steps back	33
Emerging issues - the positives and areas of concern:	34
The magic of BSS:	34
Why seven months?	34
Accent on memorization:	35
Pace of learning varies with age:	35
Overall environment: infrastructure, cleanliness, hygiene and nutrition:	35
Continuous academic support:	35
Teacher training:	35
Curriculum:	36
Dynamic learning groups:	36
Post camp follow-up:	36
Recommendations:	37
Different models for different age groups:	37
Shared understanding of what we mean by quality education:	37
Selection and training of teachers:	38
Concluding remarks	38
ANNEXURE	39
Annexure 1: Data	39
Table 1.1: Balika Shikshan Shivir (3 month camp) of Lok Jumbish, 1997	39
Table 1.2: Balika Shikshan Shivir (6 month camp) from January 1998 to December 1998	39
Table 1.3: UNICEF Aided BSS (6 month camp) January to July 1999	39
Table 1.4: UNICEF Aided BSS (6 month camp) January to July 1999	40
Table 1.5: Reasons for dropping out in 5 BSS	40
Table 1.6: Weight monitoring table of 20% in 3 BSS	40
Table 1.7: Educational status of the former BSS students from Bikaner district	41
Table 1.8: List of Teaching Learning and other Materials in the Camps*	41
Table 1.9: Charts prepared by teachers	42
Annexure 2: Qualitative Research Tools	44
Selection of the study area:	44
Checklist of issues to be covered:	44
Field work schedule	45
Research tools	46
Building a profile of the BSS visited (for all 10 BSS):	46
Format for collecting information on BSS:	46
Classroom Observation Checklist (in all 10 BSS):	47
Ice breaking activities (All 10 BSS):	47
Testing learning levels (Only in the first batch of 6 BSS):	47
Group activities with BSS girls (All 10 BSS)	48
In-depth interview with 1 BSS teacher (All 10 BSS):	48
In-depth interview with BSG functionary (in-charge of the BSS)	50
Open ended interview with District functionary (in-charge of BSS)	52
In-depth interview with master-trainer/resource person:	52
Discussion with parents of BSS children in a nearby village:	53
Group interaction with former students of BSS	53



Annexure 3: Profiles of Ten BSS	54
Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh:	54
Parsola, Udaipur	57
Pattern of teacher appointment in Parsola	59
Vas, Udaipur	59
Atru, Baran	62
Shahbad, Baran	63
Sam, Jaiselmer	67
Sarat, Jalore	69
Pugal, Bikaner	70
Kishangarh and Tabiji, Ajmer	71
Glossary	75



## Executive Summary

1. Evaluations of Balika Shikshan Shivir of Lok Jumbish Rajasthan was carried out with the objective of capturing the tangible and intangible outcomes, areas of concern thrown up by this experience and most importantly identify lessons for replication of this model in Rajasthan.
2. **Sample and profile:** Ten BSS were identified for in-depth review. The research tools covered collection and compilation of latest information on enrolment, completion and learning outcomes; classroom observations to assess teacher-pupil interaction, learning environment etc.; group activities and in-depth interviews and discussions with children to capture non-cognitive areas and extra-curricular aspects of learning; in-depth interviews and discussions with teachers to understanding the teaching and learning process, training, assessment systems; and finally focus group discussions with parents / community to understand the social / family perception of BSS.
  - 2.1. The ten BSS selected were representative geographically as well as in terms of the social / community background of students and the levels of educational development in the area. Pugal (Bikaner) and Sam (Jaiselmer) were located in remote / sparsely populated areas with very low female literacy area.
  - 2.2. Sam (Jaiselmer): NGO managed (Swatch), students from remote sparsely populated border area. Sarat (Jalore) was semi-urban catering to economically better off (Rajput) but socially backward (girls education) communities. Pilu Vas (Udaipur), Parsola (Udaipur) and Shahabad, Baran located in predominantly tribal area. : Tribal area, students from a relatively less disadvantaged community. Kheda (Pratapgarh), Atru, Baran: draws on a mixed population - tribal and non-tribal. Kishengarh and Tabiji in Ajmer catered to students from OBC as well as minority communities.
3. **Enrolment and attendance:** The initial enrolment was very high in all the ten camps and they stabilised in a few weeks (or months in a few cases). The gap between the number of girls initially enrolled and those currently attending school could be attributed to initial enrolment of under age and over age girls on the first few days of the camp. As girls are tested and divided into age-specific and level-specific groups, a significant number either go home or are sent back by the BSS teacher. In the first batch if 6 BSS visited in the sixth and seventh month of operation, only 65 per cent of the originally enrolled girls continued and among those who remained 13.38 per cent were absent on fieldwork days. Out of 471 girls shown in the register as currently enrolled in the BSS covered in phase 1, 63 were absent. In the BSS covered in phase 2 of fieldwork greater care was taken to stabilise the numbers within the first two weeks of commencement of the camp.
4. **Infrastructure and facilities:** There was considerable variation in the infrastructure and facilities of the ten BSS visited. Pilu Kheda was indeed the least endowed in terms of facilities and also the worst in terms of security, cleanliness and overall environment for learning. For all practical purposes this camp was not residential, students went home to sleep, to have a bath and often for meals. Vas (Udaipur) was managed indifferently and the quality of hygiene was poor. Conversely the quality of infrastructure, overall cleanliness, quality of food was quite exceptional in six of the ten camps visited, notable among them being Pugal, Sam and Tabiji.
5. **Health:** All camps are expected to maintain health registers and conduct regular check-up by doctors, nurses or ANMs. However our field observation data revealed the contrary.





Health registers in six of the ten camps were maintained; the height and weight record was noted at the time of admission. Unfortunately registers were not updated and they did not have information on all the girls. Besides the health register, a medical register was maintained which provided a record of the children who were ill, nature of treatment and names of drugs administered. It was indeed heartening to note that all the camps had meticulously maintained the medical register and they all had first aid kits containing some basic medicines for headache, stomach-ache, digestive tablets, bandage and cotton.

6. **Retention, completion and mainstreaming:** Data of all students who enrolled in the year 2002-03 indicate that 95.69 per cent completed the programme achieving different levels of competencies. According to the information made available by Lok Jumbish Parishad 64.39 per cent of girls enrolled in formal schools after completion. District-wise variations are considerable with Dungarpur mainstreaming 85.91 per cent and Jaiselmer 41.89 per cent. Availability of primary, and more important, upper primary schools within reach, remains a big problem in sparsely populated districts like Jaiselmer. Equally the quality of BSS camps is a worrisome issue in Chittorgarh. Discussions with former students of BSS revealed that approximately 50 per cent of girls enrolled who studied in BSS in 2001-02 continued to study in formal schools. Actual data of girls who continued were not gathered earlier therefore it is not possible to conclusively calculate the proportion of BSS graduates who continue to study in mainstream schools.
7. **Outcomes:** Camp-wise data collected on learning levels ascertained in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the course reveal that a considerable proportion of students have difficulty reaching class V in 6 to 7 months. Despite this all 471 students in the 6 camps appeared for the examinations. All the students who appeared for class 6 examinations were reported as passes. Discussions with teachers revealed that the last 8 weeks are devoted to ensuring girls are prepared for the examination. The accent is on memorising the lessons and select questions and answers. Lok Jumbish functionaries report that 63.06 per cent of the children were enrolled in formal primary/upper primary schools – even though the six camps concluded at the end of August 2003. We were informed that admissions to formal schools are open till the end of September every academic year.
8. **Profile of students:** Almost all the girls in the ten BSS were from a rural and agricultural background. Roughly all of them were involved in full time unpaid work: cattle grazing, agricultural work, sibling care and household chores. The group discussions with the girls revealed that a significant number of girls had also done paid work in the famine relief programmes. Their number was very high in Sam followed by Jalore and Pugal. In Sam accompanying parents in famine relief work was cited as an important reason for dropping out of school. Older girls were knowledgeable about agricultural practices, cattle raising, social and religious rituals and customs (for e.g. knowing about fasts and events based on the Hindu calendar, understanding of the seasonal cycles and its accompanying variations in their living contexts). They were a storehouse of oral tradition of songs, dance, games and local sayings. Discussion with students revealed that approximately twenty to thirty per cent of the children were enrolled in formal schools but were either irregular or had never attended schools. These children were familiar with the written word and some were able to recognise alphabets and numbers. The rest of the children were totally unfamiliar with alphabets but the older girls were familiar with numbers and basic number operations like addition and subtraction.
9. **Profile of teachers:** The BSS teachers were in the 23-27 age group. Most of them came from semi-urban families and were either graduates or postgraduates. A few of them had passed the Senior Secondary examinations. Some teachers had prior teaching experience either in private schools or in tutoring. Most of them heard about the BSS position through an advertisement and many of them attended the interview despite opposition from the family. The teachers were a storehouse of energy and initiative – they were



exceptional in that they had the ability to work from early morning to late at night playing teacher, mother, sister and nurse to the girls. Since most of the teachers in all the BSS had more than one BSS experience they had adjusted well and understood the unique requirements of being a BSS teacher.

10. **Teacher training:** Teachers were appreciative of the usefulness of the training programme to equip them to teach as it provided information and demonstration on some of the child centred teaching methods such as children's songs, environment building songs, use of story and drama and use of other creative mediums such as arts and crafts. Most of the TLM prepared by teachers were useful for the first two months when the children are being taught the class 1 and 2 course. As the groups reached class 3 levels the teachers primarily relied on textbooks. The teachers admitted that training did not provide an opportunity or the space to reflect on their social attitudes and culturally bound responses to caste, class, disability and other forms of variance. Nor does it prepare the teachers for the challenges of working with a diverse group of first generation learners.
11. **Curriculum:** The government prescribed primary school curriculum was followed in all the camps. During the month long training orientation, selected lessons are demonstrated for teaching and the teachers' handbook provides a weekly syllabus that consists of select chapters from the textbooks – with time allocated for completion of each level. A major concern expressed by the teachers and some of the programme managers were the short duration of the BSS programme. Its duration (7 months) was considered insufficient to cover the course content up to class V. Most teachers felt that the concepts and subject content of class IV and V didn't get the required time to be satisfactorily covered in the training period. The concepts and lessons that were not covered in the training programme were also left out during classroom teaching in the BSS. More often these were just read out to the children and the teachers provided ready-made answers given at the back of the lesson and the girls were asked to memorise them.
12. **Classroom processes:** Classroom processes were didactic – with little space for child-to-child learning or group learning. The accent was on memorisation of questions and answers pertaining to each lesson taught, memorisation of multiplication tables, practicing arithmetic problems of all types. Classroom observations revealed that there was little scope for explaining concepts and enabling the children to understand the subject at hand. Observations of classroom processes reveal that pedagogic practices centres around a repeated drill – of repeating, memorising, copying, asking questions and seeking answers from children. The image of the learner is one who follows teacher's instructions, engaging in mechanical tasks of reading aloud and reciting multiplication tables in chorus and copying from the blackboard.
13. **Continuous assessment:** Continuous assessment of the girls' learning levels by formal and informal methods was a common practice in the BSS. Given the small class size and excellent teacher-pupil ratios the teachers were able to regularly monitor the learning levels of the girls. The students were given biweekly/weekly practice tests covering the current lessons. Oral and written tests are conducted for classes I and II while it is purely written from class III onwards. The test for Class III and above was conducted under the supervision of the BEO (Block Education Officer) in Pugal and Ajmer districts. However, this was not the case in the other BSS, where the BSS in-charge conducts/monitors the tests. In all the 10 BSS for class V the Block Education Officer conducts the terminal examination. While all the 10 BSS maintain individual files for all the girls we found that they were updated regularly only in Pugal, Kishangarh, Tabiji, Atru and Shahbad. The records of the scholastic assessment were being maintained by the teachers in a set of monitoring registers that were provided by the LJP. Some significant highlights of assessment of learning outcomes are:





- 13.1. In a short time of five to six months more than 85 per cent of the girls had acquired the basic skills in the 3 R's but these skills were just about basic!
- 13.2. Girls memorised and reproduced the lessons – many of them could recite the lessons even without the textbook!
- 13.3. Hindi vocabulary was limited as they spoke in their own dialect. The girls could follow the instructions but their comprehension of what they read was poor and so were their writing skills. Independent writing skill was the poorest of all the linguistic skills in all the three BSS.
- 13.4. Majority of the girls knew simple mathematical operations of addition, subtraction and carry over. Competencies for multiplication, division and geometrical calculations were varied. Language comprehension of the statement of the sum was the first hurdle in their understanding and this was followed by the abstract ability to decide what operations to apply.

**14. What and how much are children learning?** Children in six BSS: Pilu Kheda, Parsola, Vas, Pugal, Sam and Sarat. Children who were in class/level IV were tested in language and mathematics.

**14.1. Mathematics:**

- 14.1.1. The overall performance was rather poor in mathematics. In number and basic number operations 27 per cent of the children scored below the passing percentage of 33 per cent, 24 per cent were in the partially proficient range of 33 to 60 per cent and 48 per cent scored above 60 per cent. There are variations among the 6 BSS with Pugal recording better outcomes.
- 14.1.2. In geometry and time, where children were expected to label basic shapes and draw line segments 27 per cent scored above 60 per cent - with significant camp-wise variations.
- 14.1.3. The results were similar with respect to word problems where 43 per cent scored less than 33 per cent and 29 per cent scored in the middle range. The poor performance of children in most of the (exception being Pugal and Sam) camps is a matter of concern across all the three camps. A large amount of time in mathematics classes is spent on doing formal sums. The emphasis is on drilling children on operational algorithms in a mechanical way. The age old 'obsession' with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums continues. Classroom observations substantiate the finding that teachers concentrate only on sums. The concept of place value has not been consolidated. The child knows that these numbers have to be added but he has no idea how to place them. Place value has been ignored.
- 14.1.4. The strategies adopted by children for solving word problems, adding and subtracting (who fell in the range of partially proficient and proficient) were: mental process, using finger or iconic representation such as tally marks. It is disturbing that 43 per cent of the children scored below 33 per cent in word problems. If one examines the scripts written by the children, one finds that children do not know how to cope with the demands of the task. The explanations could be that: word problems are considered inherently difficult and therefore teachers shy away from them. They are thought of as applications of the operations, and are not understood in the context in which operations should be placed. The children are unable to interpret the language in word problems. If they were able to read with comprehension, they perhaps would have been able to solve the word problem posed. Unfamiliarity with the Hindi language could perhaps explain the lack of comprehension.
- 14.1.5. In geometry relating to time and space, the performance is even more dismal. Most of the teachers stated that: *'they have not given enough attention to this area. The entire syllabus cannot be covered in seven months. We only deal with selective topics, topics that we are confident to handle.'* Classroom observations



too, have substantiated that the perception of mathematics is concerned only with understanding number and performing arithmetic operations.

14.2. **Language:**

14.2.1. Results do indicate that the performance of children in general is 'poor.' Children are not able to comprehend spoken and written Hindi with proficiency. The scripts written by the children clearly indicate the use of their local dialect. Inability to comprehend spoken and written Hindi raises an important pedagogical question about the medium of instruction used in these camps. Classroom observations indicate that teachers use the local dialect in curriculum transaction. But teacher training modules and textbooks suggest the use of Hindi as the medium of transaction. The children are constantly expected to shift from their local dialect to standardised Hindi. However, what is not well articulated are appropriate approaches to help children move from the use of dialect to standard Hindi.

14.2.2. Children who are able to write have problems of syntax, punctuation and spelling; they have not yet reached a stage where they are familiar with the written language (this was observed in the written work of children who had passed out of these camps).

14.2.3. An important indicator of the skill of reading is a comprehension of the text. Less than half the children could comprehend the given text. These were children who could read fluently and those who read by identifying or decoding each letter. Majority of the children were struggling with the mechanical task of decoding each word. Thus, for them the primary objective of reading was to decode rather than make any sense of the printed word. For such children the activity of reading remains meaningless. Children who focus on reading as a decoding activity without adequately comprehending the text may eventually become 'non-readers'. Teachers need to be trained in specific pedagogic techniques to address the skill of reading. It appears that a month long training does not seem sufficient to orient the teachers in this direction.

15. **What explains the better performance of BSS children in some camps?** There is no significant difference in the social background or educational status of girls, there is also no significant difference in the age profile or educational status of children (most of the girls were first generation school goers), qualification or training of the teachers.

15.1. The first, comparing and contrasting the ten BSS covered in this study it is apparent that continuous academic support to the teachers is indeed a big issue. Where teachers were supported and given continuous support by LJ – learning outcomes were better.

15.2. The loudest message emanating from this study is that the overall environment of the camp: infrastructure, cleanliness, hygiene and nutrition exerts a significant influence on cognitive as well as non-cognitive outcomes. Creating a conducive learning environment is as important as the actual teaching-learning process. The caring environment partly explains the high motivation levels of students as well as teachers in some camps and very poor performance on others.

**The “incidental” gains:** Balika Shikshan Shivir has been able to achieve the near impossible, get girls out of defined roles, enable them to access education and give them a chance to reclaim a lost childhood. It has given young girls freedom (albeit for a short period) from the drudgery of work and sibling care. In the villages where BSS operates, the very fact that a group of young girls were able to access education made a lot of difference – we heard several cases of delayed 'Gauna' (premarital ritual) and even marriage, no mean achievement in Rajasthan! Parents and community leaders reported that sending a few girls to BSS had a ripple effect; many more girls are now attending school. These young girls come back and cajole and bully their parents, neighbours and relatives to send their daughters to school. The



non-cognitive outcomes of BSS are quite significant and noteworthy – especially in Rajasthan where girls get very few opportunities.

- 15.3. The most significant and the most tangible outcomes are the enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence of the girls. As the children settle down, interact with their peers, learn to read and write, learn to manage their time and most importantly gain the confidence to speak out – they transform slowly. This magic is palpable – parents admit that their daughters were transformed within a few months. The key to this is an atmosphere devoid of fear. The teachers play multiple roles: as surrogate mothers, a kind aunt, an elder sister and a grandmother too. The bonding between the children and the teachers is evident and perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of the BSS process.
16. **Why seven months?** Seven months is indeed too short to attain class 5 competencies. The first two weeks are devoted to enabling children to settle down, get used to living together, learn the rules of community living with respect to use of common facilities, personal hygiene, keeping the place clean, getting to know each other and getting used to the schedule. This is also the period when children are grouped according to their learning level. Basic knowledge of alphabets/numbers and reading small words, mathematical concepts are covered over the next two weeks. Essentially, the first month is devoted to getting into the rhythm of the accelerated learning programme and becoming familiar with alphabets and numbers. Subsequent weeks/months are devoted to enabling the children to attain class specific competencies, moving gradually from one level to the next. As they near the end of their programme, children are introduced to the world of examinations – building their ability as well as their confidence to take a public examination for certification and to enable them to move on to upper primary or middle school. The last six to eight weeks are devoted to intensive preparation for the class 5 examinations – which is organised by the District Education Office.
17. **Recommendations:**
  - 17.1. **Different models for different age groups:**
    - 17.1.1. **Short duration bridge courses for girls in the 9 to 11 age group** and help them enrol in formal upper primary schools. These camps could be organised for six months. Ensuring access to and regular functioning of UPS is a precondition for the success of this strategy. Equally, systematic follow-up programmes are necessary to provide academic support on a periodic basis (at least for the first two years after graduation) to ensure that the girls do not drop out.
    - 17.1.2. **Longer duration residential programmes are necessary for older girls** who have missed the bus. SSA could consider an 18-month programme to enable girls to reach at least class 8 or even class 10 level and also ensure that the reading/writing skills are complemented with life skills. This could either be done through the formal school system or through the open school system of Rajasthan. Combining the above with inputs in livelihood skills (non-farm self-employment opportunities, horticulture, agriculture and management of self-help groups) could be of immense value. This would not only make education relevant to the lives of young adolescents, but would also help us break the inter-generational spiral of powerlessness experienced by women in Rajasthan.
  - 17.2. **Emphasis on quality and outcomes:** Need to develop a shared understanding of what we mean by quality education – balancing the cognitive with the non-cognitive aspects of education. Rigorous curriculum development is called for. Selective adaptation of lessons from existing books is not enough. LJ/SSA could consider initiating a process of curriculum development based on expected levels of learning at each level. This is not to say that the textbooks should be jettisoned



altogether. If we are serious about accelerated learning, then we cannot shy away from developing workbooks and other teaching learning material that can be used in BSS. After all, enabling children to learn at an accelerated pace requires more care and more rigour.

17.2.1. To this end, serious efforts need to be made to make the training more holistic. Systematic coverage of pedagogic issues for multi grade and multi level teaching, child-to-child learning methods and gender and social aspects specific to girls' education are essential.

18. **Opportunities in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** SSA provides a window of opportunity. Can the experience of Lok Jumbish, in particular the experience of Balika Shikshan Shivir add value to Rajasthan's SSA strategy for achieving universal access to elementary education and bridge all gender and social equity gaps by 2007?



## Detailed Report

### Locating BSS in the context of girls education in Rajasthan:

India is a country of paradoxes and Rajasthan a state with a lot of potential just waiting to be tapped. Almost half of the girls in the 11+ age group are not attending any educational programme and a vast majority of them go through primary school without learning much and many more never enrol, as evident in Table 1 below! On the other hand, where even small windows of opportunities are opened up for girls, the demand is immense. There has been a steady growth in social demand for education and skills, especially in those very regions/communities that were considered resistant to girls' education. The tragedy is not that there is no demand for girls' education or their desire for education; the tragedy is that good quality education that is relevant (especially for poor rural and urban girls) remains elusive.

**Table 1: Girls Age 6-14 Years Attending School by Residence**

State	NFHS 1992-93				NFHS 1998-99			
	6-10		11-14		6-10		11-14	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
All India	81.8	55.0	75.7	47.9	89.1	75.1	82.8	61.6
Rajasthan	72.4	36.4	71.2	28.6	82.7	66.0	75.5	44.9

Source: NFHS I and II, Rajasthan and all-India reports.

While we all know that the problem of non-enrolment, non-participation and poor quality has been with us now for several decades, yet the debate on girls' education tends to revolve around the school system, a system where, to a large extent, age is correlated with class. If one were to scrutinise the profile of girls who are not in school then it becomes quite apparent that a significant proportion of them are too old to enter class 1 in primary schools and too young to be participants in adult education programmes. Equally important is their location – most of them are from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, from remote areas/scattered habitation, tribal areas, migrant groups and urban slums. They are also the ones who share an unfair burden of work at home and in home based farm and non-farm work.

A great deal has been written about problems, bottlenecks and rigidities of existing schemes/programmes on the one hand and the inability of planners and practitioners to customise the services to better serve a more differentiated market. Recent research and documentation of alternative approaches emphasise that if the relevance and interest in even basic education is to be retained, both the backward and forward linkages need to be strengthened. The former through providing crèches, *balwadis*, early childhood nutrition and the latter by increasing the number of upper primary/middle schools, and skill providing institutions linked to the employment market. A rich body of research convincingly argues that quality and relevance is the key that can turn the system around to ensure that every single child who enters school has an opportunity to learn and grow without want, fear or prejudice. There is a lot of value in these arguments.

A bewildering variety of schools coexist in Rajasthan – government primary schools, private full time schools (aided and unaided), Rajiv Gandhi Patashalas, Sahaj Shiksha Kendra – each offering a different package and catering to a different strata of the population. It is now widely accepted that male, upper caste, urban, better-off groups are increasingly accessing private schools, which are regarded as being of better quality. Meanwhile poorer children, especially girls, particularly in backward regions are accessing government facilities formal and alternative, which is popularly perceived as being of poor quality. Research studies done



under the aegis of DPEP confirm that with economic security, parents consciously opt for private schools for their children<sup>1</sup>. The unfortunate fact is that the financial crunch hits schools catering to the most deprived and those most in need. If such a situation is allowed to continue unchecked it may well wash away the gains of the previous decade – especially with respect to girls’ education.

Recent research also points out that the actual teaching time and the number of teaching days in formal primary government schools located in rural areas and in urban slums is inadequate for first generation learners to acquire rudimentary literacy and numerical skills. The actual teaching time can be as low as 25 minutes per day per class in multi-grade situations where one teacher simultaneously manages from two to three groups of children. Equally, the number of actual teaching days has been recorded to be as low as 140 days per year in several regions of the country. When this situation is seen in the context of the high work burden of girls in poor rural and urban communities, it is indeed not at all surprising that they learn very little, even when they go to school for three to five years. As a result, we now have a situation where a very large number of girls, even those who may have been to school for a few years, are either illiterate or have merely rudimentary skills.

While part of the reason for poor learning achievements could be attributed to poor quality teaching and inadequate teaching time. This together with irregular attendance, inability to revise lessons at home, lack of access to any written matter – story books, magazines etc magnifies the problem. A major factor is the work burden of girls at home, which also contributes to poor learning. When girls from very poor families do get a chance to attend school, they are also burdened with work before and after school and the sheer drudgery of supporting their parents who eke out a living from daily wage work or hard agricultural work or through collection and sale of minor forest produce. The situation is particularly severe for girls in the 9+ age group, a period in life when they are catapulted into undertaking adult responsibilities. *The burden of work is most severe for the first-born; especially the eldest daughter.* The long term educational and health consequences are quite alarming. Poorly nourished and over worked young girls are the ones who are married off early and have babies soon after, thereby perpetuating the intergenerational spiral of ill-health, low self-esteem and low awareness.

While the predicament of older girls who are not in school has been acknowledged over many years, it is only in the last decade that serious efforts were made – albeit on a small scale – to address the educational needs of older/adolescent girls. The first steps were taken under the aegis of the Mahila Samakhyas Programme (1989) when residential condensed educational programmes, known as Mahila Shikshan Kendra, were organised with the explicit purpose of enabling older out of schoolgirls to access basic education. In Andhra Pradesh, the M V Foundation of Hyderabad organised the first series (1991) of short-term residential bridge courses to enable child workers to get back into the formal education stream. The Lok Jumbish project introduced Mahila Shikshan Vihar and Balika Shikshan Shivir, again to enable out-of-school girls to access basic education. The National Child Labour Programme also supported NGOs to start full-time residential/non-residential schools to enable child workers (mostly boys) to enter the education stream.

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<sup>1</sup> Aggarwal, Yash. *An Assessment of Trends in Access and Retention*. New Delhi: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 2000 and Vimala Ramachandran (2002); *hierarchies of Access: Gender and Social Equity in Primary Education* (European Commission, New Delhi 2002)





**Exhibit 1: Condensed residential programmes for girls**

Name	Programme	Scope	Scale
Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK)	Mahila Samakhya Programme Government of India	Residential condensed educational programme for out of schoolgirls (mostly adolescents) to complete either primary level in 6 to 12 months in other areas. In some areas to focus overall education and development of adolescent girls and young women.	Introduced in 1989 as an integral part of Mahila Samakhya – there are approximately 50 MSKs operational in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat
Residential Bridge Courses (RBC)	Integral part UEE strategy in DPEP and now SSA	Conceived as a short-term residential programme (two to 4 months) to enable child-workers to make the transition to formal primary schools. Apart from enabling children in the 6-14 age group to reach age appropriate class, the bridge courses train and support children to become agents for elimination of child labour in rural areas.	Pioneered by M V Foundation in Andhra Pradesh, this was adopted by the Governments of AP and Karnataka on a wide scale and is also being considered as part of SSA in many other states.
Residential Schools for erstwhile child workers	National Child Labour Programme (NCLP)	Residential schools that cater to children who have been rescued from specific industries – carpet, match, glass, copper works etc. This was not conceived as a mainstreaming strategy but children take the formal school examinations.	Twenty districts spread over the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh – targeted specifically for rehabilitation of child workers.

Over the decade of the 1990s, bridge courses have come to be accepted as a viable intermediate strategy to get children back to school. An interesting range of bridge courses are today being run across the country, from programmes that function for a few months (in the summer) to 7 to 12 months duration (see Exhibit 1 above). People who manage/run these programmes tell us that older children indeed learn at a quicker pace and that these models are particularly effective for girls and provide value addition to their overall self-esteem and self confidence, social and health related awareness. Most important, it is seen as a rare chance for girls to reclaim the joys of childhood. This review will hopefully add to our understanding of the effectiveness of how such accelerated programmes work.

Lok Jumbish introduced residential camps for girls in 1997-98 (see Tables 1.1 to 1.4 in Annexure I for details on number of children enrolled in the camps held up to 2001). We were informed that a group of LJ functionaries visited MV Foundation residential bridge courses and designed the first residential camp for girls. Initially these camps were organised for 3 months. The period was then extended to 6 months in the UNICEF assisted camps of 1999. There were no camps in 2000 and 2001. The camps were resumed in 2002.

### Objectives of this review:

The objectives of this review, as spelt out in the Terms of Reference is:

- To understand the methods adopted for creating and sustaining the interest level of the learners;
- To review the curriculum, textbooks and supplementary reading material used in the camp;
- To analyse the extent to which the attained learning outcomes have equivalence with the expectations at the primary level;
- To identify the incidental gains, both short and long term for the resident beneficiaries;



- e. To review the process of selection of BSS teachers and their participation in the training process;
- f. To study mainstreaming of the adolescent girl learners into the formal education system;
- g. To assess the impact of these learners as agents of social change in their communities;
- h. To assess the sustainability and replicability of the intervention and derive implications for the wider system of education.

## Methodology:

In accordance with the specific tasks outlined in the Terms of Reference, we listed the research questions. We prepared a matrix of questions and the research tools to be used to gather the information. The qualitative research tools were developed on the basis of the matrix. The tools were peer reviewed and shared with Lok Jumbish Parishad. The research tools covered the following areas:

- **Profile of BSS covered:** data on enrolment/attendance, learning assessment, health, nutrition, activities, supply of books etc., collection from registers;
- **Classroom observations:** teaching method, teacher-pupil interaction, learning environment etc.;
- **Group activities with children:** for non-cognitive areas and extra-curricular aspects of learning;
- **Interviews/detailed discussion with BSS students:** for both cognitive as well as other aspects of their life and experience in BSS;
- **Testing:** Testing of a 20-25 per cent sample of students in language and mathematics of those reported to be at the class 4 level
- **In-depth interviews with teachers, supervisors (BSG):** To develop a profile of teachers and to explore issues related to curriculum, training, day-to-day management of BSS, learning processes and outcomes and related issues
- **FGD:**
  - Focus group discussion in community and one-to-one interactions with select mothers/fathers;
  - Former BSS students
  - Teachers of BSS
- **Perusal of records and registers:** Perusal of registers and records maintained in BSS, the training material, observation of training.

The qualitative research tools used in the study are given in Annexure 4.

## Sample Selection:

At the outset it must be clarified that while as of March 2003 there were 129 Balika Shikshan Shivir operating in Rajasthan, most of them only 20 BSS were in the final stages, i.e., concluding in the months of July, August and September 2003. When we commenced our work on this review we were informed that 20 BSS were functioning catering to 1867 girls. We were also informed that a new batch of around 130 BSS were to commence on 1 September 2003. Given the above situation we selected 6 BSS from the first lot: Bikaner (Pugal), Chittorgarh (Pratapgarh), Jaiselmer (Sam), Udaipur (Kotra and Dhariawat) and Jalore (Sarat) and 4 from the second lot: Ajmer (Tabiji and Kishengarh) and Baran (Atru and Shahbad). Efforts were made to ensure both geographical representation (all regions of Rajasthan) and also a mix of old and new areas of Lok Jumbish work.



**Table 2: Sample BSS covered in the present study**

<b>Phase 1</b> 24 August to 4 September 2003	<b>Phase 2</b> 6 to 12 October 2003
1. Pugal, Bikaner 2. Pilu Kheda, Pratapgarh, Chittorgarh 3. Sam, Jaiselmer 4. Vas, Kotra, Udaipur 5. Parsola, Dhariyawad, Udaipur 6. Sarat, Jalore	7. Tabiji, Ajmer 8. Kishengarh, Ajmer 9. Atru, Baran 10. Shahbad, Baran

**Table 3 Profile of BSS Covered:**

<b>BSS</b>	<b>Brief profile</b>
Pugal, Bikaner	Students from remote regions (with low female literacy), good building, infrastructure and teaching learning environment, first BSS camp in the cluster, experienced teachers, excellent support from LJ – a showcase BSS for LJ;
Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh	Banjara community, located inside their village, not strictly residential, with over 50 per cent children running home every night! High turnover of teachers too!
Sam, Jaiselmer	NGO managed (Swatch), students from a remote sparsely populated region, border area, harsh living conditions, conservative, fairly good infrastructure, experienced teachers and high level of motivation;
Vas, Udaipur	Tribal area, new cluster for LJ, students from very poor and backward tribal communities (Garasia, Gamiti and few Meena), 1 teacher untrained, 1 did not complete training and remaining 4 were experienced and trained;
Parsola Udaipur	Tribal area, students from a relatively less disadvantaged community, (Meena, Megwal and Bhil) fairly good infrastructure, teachers turnover very high;
Sarat, Jalore	Not remote/semi-urban, students economically better off (Rajput) but socially backward (girls education), fairly good infrastructure, experienced teachers 5 out of 6 were away on training;
Tabiji,, Ajmer	The showcase BSS of Ajmer, good infrastructure, positive learning environment, third camp in the same building and excellent support from LJ, mix of OBC, SC and Muslim; experienced teachers (except 2) and high level of LJ academic support;
Kishengarh, Ajmer	Second camp in the same building, in the heart of the town, frequent visitors, most girls from OBC and few SC, experienced teachers;
Atru, Baran	Area has mixed population (tribal and non-tribal), second camp in the same building (better organised and draws upon previous cycle experience), qualified and trained teachers;
Shahbad, Baran	Within a LJ complex, second camp in the same area, students from Sahariya tribal community, a few Sikhs and minority groups and qualified teachers;

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

Detailed narrative profiles of the ten BSS are given in Annexure 4.

### Enrolment:

The enrolment data needs to be read with some care. As evident, the initial enrolment was very high in all the ten camps and they stabilised in a few weeks (or months in a few cases). The gap between the number of girls initially enrolled and those currently attending school could be attributed to initial enrolment of under age and over age girls on the first few days of



the camp. As girls are tested and divided into age-specific and level-specific groups, a significant number either go home or are sent back by the BSS teacher. In the first batch if 6 BSS visited in the sixth and seventh month of operation, only 65 per cent of the originally enrolled girls continued and among those who remained 13.38 per cent were absent on fieldwork days. Out of 471 girls shown in the register as currently enrolled in the BSS covered in phase 1, 63 were absent. For example, in Pilu Kheda, the enrolment and dropout pattern was as follows: from March 2 to March 27, the number of girls enrolled increased from 37 to 71, by mid-May girls began leaving and the number came down to 40 on the day of our visit. The situation in Parsola was different, the BSS began with an initial enrolment of 183 children, after a few days the teachers sent under age (below 9) girls home and the number dropped to 125. Another 35 girls dropped out from end of March to early May! The registers indicated 80, but teachers informed us that on an average 75 were present. However during fieldwork we counted only 58 children. We were informed that in the BSS covered in phase 2 of fieldwork greater care was taken to stabilise the numbers within the first two weeks of commencement of the camp.

**Table 4: Enrolment and attendance:**

Location of BSS		Initially enrolled	Currently enrolled	During fieldwork
<b>Phase 1</b>				
1	Pugal Bikaner	136	98	98
2	Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh	71	45	40
3	Sam, Jaiselmer	193	80	74
4	Vas, Udaipur	124	72	63
5	Parsola Udaipur	125	80	58
6	Sarat, Jalore	167	96	75
<b>Phase 2</b>				
7	Tabiji., Ajmer	139	105	105
8	Kishengarh, Ajmer	78	54	54
9	Atru, Baran	115	90	90
10	Shahbad, Baran	111	101	101
<b>Total</b>		<b>1259</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>758</b>

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

### Infrastructure, facilities, health and hygiene:

There was considerable variation in the infrastructure and facilities of the ten BSS visited. As seen in Table 5 below, Pilu Kheda was indeed the least endowed in terms of facilities and also the worst in terms of security. For all practical purposes this camp was not residential, students went home to sleep, to have a bath and often for meals. Conversely the quality of infrastructure, overall cleanliness, quality of food was quite exceptional in six of the ten camps visited, notable among them being Pugal, Sam and Tabiji. While we will return to this issue later, at this stage it is important to flag the issue whereby the overall environment comprising quality of care (food and health), security and cleanliness impacts on the overall cognitive as well as non-cognitive outcomes.

The correlation between health and education is important specifically when it comes to the poor. It is now widely acknowledged that poor health and nutrition can be a barrier to attendance and educational attainment and achievement and chronic illness and malnourishment are impediments to children's participation in school. Poor and ill health can 'dull motivation, curiosity and reduce child's exploratory play and interaction with care givers and the environment' (ibid). Inadequate nutrition impacts on the child's ability to learn and retain new concepts. (Ramachandran, et al: 2003).



**Table 5: Infrastructure and facilities:**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Security</b>	<b>Toilet</b>	<b>Bath</b>	<b>Playground</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Pugal Bikaner</b>	Bore well, piped and water tanker	Very good	Pit toilet and open field	Pucca room	Yes
<b>2</b>	<b>Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh</b>	Open Well	Very poor, porous	Open fields	Went home	Small space
<b>3</b>	<b>Sam, Jaiselmer</b>	Bore well and tanker	Good, barbed wire fence	Pit toilet and open fields	One pucca room and open space	Sand dunes
<b>4</b>	<b>Vas, Udaipur</b>	Bore well	Good	Pit toilet and open fields	Went to the river	Small space
<b>5</b>	<b>Parsola Udaipur</b>	Bore well	Poor	Pit toilet and open fields	4 pucca rooms	On the roof
<b>6</b>	<b>Sarat, Jalore</b>	Bore well	Good	Pit toilet and open fields	Open space and 2 rooms	Little space
<b>7</b>	<b>Tabiji,, Ajmer</b>	Piped and bore well	Very good	Pit toilet and open fields	Pucca open space and 6 rooms	Large ground
<b>8</b>	<b>Kishengarh, Ajmer</b>	Piped and bore well	Very good	Flush toilet	Pucca open space and 2 rooms	On the roof
<b>9</b>	<b>Atru, Baran</b>	Piped and tanker	Good	Flush toilet and open field	Temporary closed space	Large ground
<b>10</b>	<b>Shahbad, Baran</b>	Bore well	Good	Flush toilet and open field	Temporary closed space	Large ground

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

LJ functionaries informed us that all camps are expected to maintain health registers and conduct regular check-up by doctors, nurses or ANMs. However our field observation data revealed the contrary. Health registers in six of the ten camps were maintained, the height and weight record was noted at the time of admission. Unfortunately registers were not updated and they did not have information on all the girls. Besides the health register, a medical register was maintained which provided a record of the children who were ill, nature of treatment and names of drugs administered. It was indeed heartening to note that all the camps had meticulously maintained the medical register and they all had first aid kits containing some basic medicines for headache, stomach-ache, digestive tablets, bandage and cotton.



### Box 1: Health check-up and first aid

*In Pilu Kheda no proper medical health or medical check-up had been conducted at the time of registration of girls. Narrating an incident a teacher pointed out that 'when the shivir started, the source of drinking water was from the overhead tank. Both teachers and children kept falling sick. For quite sometime nobody seemed to be aware of the problem. It was by sheer chance that we got the tank checked up. Water was drained out and it appeared that the tank had not been cleaned for sometime. The tank was then subsequently cleaned with DDT powder.' Ever since then drinking water is fetched from the village open well. This was also the time when the ANM and a nurse from village Pilu visited the shivir (the only visit since the inception of the camp). Repeated requests for a visit by the doctor were turned down. The BSG too was informed but no action seemed to have taken place. The health register of this camp only indicated the weight and height of the children noted by the nurse on her one time visit.*

*In Parsola the ANM appeared more frequently, around 9 visits were recorded, but height and weight had been taken only once and that only at the beginning of the shivir. However, only a routine check-up of the children was done and those found ill were given medicines at the PHC centre. The ANM in Vas has paid only two visits. A local private doctor residing in the vicinity is often called upon for check-ups. Sometimes a local vaid (ayurvedic doctor) also visited the camps. But the teachers complained that they had difficulty in passing the medical bills of private doctors as it was against the norm. The PHC is 6 kilometres from the shivir. Children with prolonged fever are taken to Udaipur.*

*In Atru a doctor had visited the camp twice. The medical reports of these two occasions were yet to be submitted. The teachers on their own initiative have taken the children's weight and height. A doctor had come for a medical check-up in Shahbad, a week before our visit. However during his one and half hour visit he could only do a preliminary check-up of those (30) girls suffering from some minor ailments like eye flu, cough and cold and itching. The Project Officer has sent a letter to the CHMO and the Collector requesting a doctor to visit the camp. Children who are ill are given milk, apple and biscuits.*

Field notes, Madhumita Pal, 2003

While we did not measure and weigh the students during fieldwork, we interacted (interviewed) 20 per cent of the students. Approximately forty per cent girls reported that they gained about 1-2 kilograms in weight during the six months of their stay in the BSS. Minor ailments like eye flu, malaria, fever (common cold), boils, earache and diarrhoea were treated in the camp. Some students were also taken to the local hospital at the block or district headquarters for a medical check-up. However, in the event of an infectious disease or major illness they were sent home. We were also informed that children with psychological problems termed as 'mentally unsound' are sent back. Very few children with physical disabilities (polio) are able to complete the entire camp period as they often find it difficult to cope with camp activities.





**Table 6: Health and hygiene:**

	Location	Check-up	Food	Cleanliness	Waste disposal
1	Pugal Bikaner	Initial check-up and ANM on call	Prepared with care	Clean and organised	Good
2	Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh	Initial check only	Not prepared with care – tender system for prepared food	Dirty and disorganised	Very poor
3	Sam, Jaiselmer	Initial check up and PHC next door	Prepared with care	Fairly clean	Fairly good
4	Vas, Udaipur	Initial check-up and 2 visits	Prepared with care	Dirty and unhygienic	Poor waste disposal
5	Parsola Udaipur	Initial check-up and 9 visits	Prepared with care	Fairly clean and organised	Fairly good
6	Sarat, Jalore	Initial check-up and doctor on call	Prepared with care	Clean and organised	Very good
7	Tabiji,, Ajmer	Initial check-up and follow-up for Malaria and Anaemia	Prepared with care	Good and very organised	Fairly good
8	Kishengarh, Ajmer	Initial check-up	Not prepared with care and not very hygienic	Good and organised	Not very good
9	Atru, Baran	Initial check-up and doctor on call	Prepared with care	Good and organised	Fairly good
10	Shahbad, Baran	Initial check-up and doctor on call	Prepared with care	Good and organised	Very good

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

The teachers in Vas, Shahbad, Tabiji and Kishengarh had discussions (known as health classes) with older girls on the menstrual cycle and the process of childbirth. Initially girls found it difficult to discuss these topics with them. Too shy to discuss these issues the children would often tear mattress covers or bed sheets to use during their menstrual period or lie down with an excuse of 'high fever.' It was left to the teachers to individually address these issues with children. Some teachers organised informal classes with the girls on personal hygiene and showed the girls how to make sanitary napkins. Three camps provided cotton and cloth and the others procured sanitary pads. The girls were also introduced to under garments – especially during the menstrual cycle. We saw a teacher in Vas buying under garments, however the parents paid for it. Teachers in Shahbad participated in an impromptu training to make sanitary napkins. This was organised by LJ functionaries from Jodhpur.

All the BSS camps supply *kala dath manjan* (carbon tooth powder), soap and oil, however the quality, quantity and regularity of supplies differed from camp to camp. We noticed that girls shared combs in all the camps and given that lice infestation is a common problem, sharing personal items is not hygienic. The overall hygiene in the camps varied from bad to fairly good. Teachers in one *shivir* did not ensure that children bathed regularly. In Atru, a woman from the local beauty parlour was invited to cut the children's hair. In other *shivirs* the teachers themselves gave the children a haircut. We were informed that personal hygiene is discussed at length during the *chetna satra*.



## Retention and completion:

Data of all students who enrolled in the year 2002-03 indicate that 95.69 per cent completed the programme achieving different levels of competencies. According to the information made available by Lok Jumbish Parishad 64.39 per cent of girls enrolled in formal schools after completion. District-wise variations are considerable (percentage in parenthesis in Table 7 below), with Dungarpur mainstreaming 85.91 per cent and Jaiselmer 41.89 per cent. Availability of primary, and more important, upper primary schools within reach, remains a big problem in sparsely populated districts like Jaiselmer. Equally the quality of BSS camps is a worrisome issue in Chittorgarh. Discussions with former students of BSS revealed that approximately 50 per cent of girls enrolled who studied in BSS in 2001-02 continued to study in formal schools. Actual data of girls who continued were not gathered earlier therefore it is not possible to conclusively calculate the proportion of BSS graduates who continue to study in mainstream schools.

**Table 7: Completion status of Balika Shikshan Shivir, 2002-03**

	District	Camps	Enrolled	Passed				Mainstreamed
				III	IV	V	Total	
1	Ajmer	11	1042	67	164	760	999	511 (49%)
2	Banswara	28	2108	171	302	1758	2231	1629 (77.28%)
3	Baran	4	422	30	2	384	416	304 (72%)
4	Barmer	12	1096	191	160	663	1078	882 (80.5%)
5	Bikaner	11	1045	66	70	687	1026	611 (58.5%)
6	Chittorgarh	12	865	97	52	398	565	400 (46.24%)
7	Dungarpur	5	362	35	56	254	345	311 (85.91%)
8	Jaiselmer	10	857	92	122	468	801	359 (41.89%)
9	Jalore	8	731	59	188	468	725	429 (58.69%)
10	Jodhpur	9	776	72	24	677	789	523 (67.4%)
11	Pali	3	310	57	34	228	319	206 (66.45%)
12	Rajsamand	6	419	31	38	328	397	317 (75.66%)
13	Udaipur	22	2127	221	422	1164	1945	1348 (63.38%)
	<b>Total</b>	141	12160	1189	1634	8237	11636	7830 (64.39%)
<b>Percentage</b>				<b>9.78</b>	<b>13.44</b>	<b>67.74</b>	<b>95.69</b>	

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003

Camp-wise data on learning levels ascertained in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the course reveal that a considerable proportion of students have difficulty reaching class V in 6 to 7 months. Despite this all 471 students in the 6 camps appeared for the examinations. It appears from Table 8 below that all of them cleared the examinations. We will revert to this issue later, but discussions with teachers revealed that the last 8 weeks are devoted to ensuring girls are prepared for the examination. The accent is on memorising the lessons and select questions and answers. Lok Jumbish functionaries report that 63.06 per cent of the children were enrolled in formal primary/upper primary schools – even though the six camps concluded at the end of August 2003. We were informed that admissions to formal schools are open till the end of September every academic year.



**Table 8: Results of the terminal examinations**

Location		Class completed					Enrolled in formal school
		II	III	IV	V	Total	
1	Pugal Bikaner		3	7	88	98	98
2	Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh		22		28	50	28
3	Sam, Jaiselmer			8	67	81	18
4	Vas, Udaipur			46	46	92	62
5	Parsola Udaipur			12	69	81	69
6	Sarat, Jalore	9			66	75	22
	Total	9	25	73	364	471	297 (63.06%)

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003

### Profile of BSS students:

Almost all the girls in the ten BSS were from a rural and agricultural background. Roughly all of them were involved in full time unpaid work: cattle grazing, agricultural work, sibling care and household chores. The group discussions with the girls revealed that a significant number of girls had also done paid work in the famine relief programmes. Their number was very high in Sam followed by Jalore and Pugal. In Sam accompanying parents in famine relief work was cited as an important reason for dropping out of school. Older girls were knowledgeable about agricultural practices, cattle raising, social and religious rituals and customs (for e.g. knowing about fasts and events based on the Hindu calendar, understanding of the seasonal cycles and its accompanying variations in their living contexts). They were a storehouse of oral tradition of songs, dance, games and local sayings.

**Table 9: Age-wise break-up of girls (from registers)<sup>2</sup>**

Age Group	No. of girls
Below 9	Nil
9 to 11	367
11 to 13	357
13 to 15	118
15 +	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

Given the extreme social and economic deprivation in Jaiselmer a significant proportion of girls in the 9 to 11 age-group were never enrolled in school and they constituted a significant proportion (26 out of 74 girls present on day of fieldwork). The situation in Jalore was representative of the trend. The Lok Jumbish PO explained that younger girls normally accompany their older siblings to the BSS because parents insisted that the younger daughters should be admitted along with the older ones to relieve the burden of childcare. Besides this, for most rural, non-literate parents the fine distinction based on age segregation doesn't have much meaning. Therefore if a group of girls from one village is sent to the BSS then their parents insist that the entire group of non-school going girls be taken in for admission. This was not the case in Bikaner and Ajmer districts where strong community mobilisation work of LJP field workers and their earlier learning experience of running the BSS programme stood them in good stead. It helped the programme managers convince parents to send the older girls to the BSS and the younger ones were helped with enrolment in the local GPS.

<sup>2</sup> There is a discrepancy between the numbers of children "currently enrolled" as shown in Table 2 and in Tables 7 and 8 because of discrepancies in data made available in the BSS.



Both these districts were also amongst the first few ones where LJP started its educational programmes of micro planning, teacher training and alternative educational interventions such as SSK, *Kishori Manch*, and a mobile school for the children of nomadic tribes.

### Box 2: Sarvar from Pugal

*She was a 13-year-old girl, the youngest in a family of 5 brothers and 3 sisters from a SC Muslim family. Two sisters and one brother were married. Her family owns 40 bighas of land. Her village has a female Muslim Sarpanch. Her mother is also a ward-panch. Her father or brother accompanies her mother when she goes to a Panchayat meeting. Her mother has helped in improving the civic services and food distribution from the PDS in her village. She had helped in getting monetary compensation for some families whose houses were damaged in the recent past by the cloud burst.*

*She said that she didn't go to the village school because she was scared of being beaten up by the schoolteacher. Before coming to the BSS she was helping her mother and sisters in household work. When she heard the positive experience of learning in seven months from 4 girls of her village who had attended the previous BSS she asked her mother to send her to this BSS. She was enjoying her stay in the BSS and seemed to be very social and had formed a close friendship with two girls from another village. She was very keen to complete class V from this BSS. She said, 'I'll take class V exams from this BSS and then I'll attend another BSS and then another one. I'll be able to complete class X.' Otherwise she said that she would like to study up to X class from Bikaner city while staying with her maternal cousin who was also a para-teacher in an alternate school. Her mother has assured her that she would bear the expenses of her studies in Bikaner. She wants to become a teacher and wants to make many more children literate.*

*She was married three years ago. She now wished to continue with her higher schooling. She said that her mother in law was supportive of her studying further because she wanted her to be employed as a teacher or a para-teacher.*

*Her wish was that all girls should study and they shouldn't be married off at an early age. She had gone home twice for festivals and meeting her family members and her brother feels happy that she has learnt to study.*

Field notes of Vandana Mahajan, 2003

Opinions were divided among teachers and LJP officials about how age of entry influences retention, motivation and learning achievement. The dropout rate among very young girls is high in the first six weeks of the camp. Older girls, especially in the 12+ age group were more enthusiastic in the initial phase. They tended to dropout when the pace of work picked up or when they got homesick. Many teachers felt that older girls grasped concepts quickly and they also believed that this is their only chance of education and therefore they must make the best of it. Older girls, who were also eager to get a certificate of completion at the end of the course, sensed issues of relevance far more acutely. Many of them said that the academic component should be complemented with more practical and life-skill education inputs.

**Table 10: Caste / community break-up of children (from register)**

Caste / community	BSS students
Scheduled Caste	181
Scheduled Tribe	293
Other Backward Castes	244
Minority (Muslim)	100
Others	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003

As the table indicates, a large majority of the children who are enrolled in the camp either belong to the Scheduled Tribe or Scheduled Caste followed by children from OBC. Most of the students were first generation school goers.



## Profile of teachers:

The teacher is the centre point around which the effective functioning of the camp revolves. The background information, age, caste, the education, professional training and experience, all these have an impact on the outlook and attitudes of teachers (See Table 11 below). The data indicates that most of the teachers were in the 23-27 age group. Most of them came from semi-urban families that were among the few upwardly mobile families of their respective areas where the girls had the benefit of an education. The educational qualification of the teachers is either graduation or post graduation. However, few of them had passed the Senior Secondary examinations. Some teachers were professionally qualified with a degree in either education or physical education. Some teachers had prior teaching experience either in private schools or in tutoring. Most of them heard about the BSS position through an advertisement and many of them attended the interview despite opposition from the family. Many of them admitted that financial crisis in the family (unemployed husband or separation from husband) required them to look for an alternative source of income. If given the opportunity all but two teachers wanted to enrol again as a *shivir* teacher. These two teachers felt that there was no future in this type of job and *'it was at the insistence of Project Officers that they were doing it the second time.'* However, almost all the teachers saw working in a *shivir* as a 'stop-gap' arrangement till something more permanent came up. For a majority of them this experience was a launching pad for better work opportunities. Some were preparing for higher education, others had applied for government jobs as teachers or in banks, the police force or in the district administration.

**Table 11: Profile of teachers**

BSS (Teachers)	Age	Qualifications	Camp Experience	Caste / Community
<b>Pugal (7)</b>	Below 25: 5 Above 25: 2	High School: 3 BA: 2, MA 2	More than 1: All	OBC: 2 FC: 5
<b>Pilu Kheda (4)</b>	Below 25: 2 Above 25: 2	BA: 2 MA: 2	More than 1: 2 No exp. 2	FC: 3 OBC: 1
<b>Sam (7)</b>	Below 25: 6 Above 25: 1	BA: 4 MA: 3	More than 1: All	OBC: 4 FC: 3
<b>Vas (6)</b>	Below 25: 4 Above 25: 2	High School: 2 BA: 1, MA: 2 MA B Ed: 1	More than 1: 3 No Exp: 3	FC: 5 SC: 1
<b>Parsola (5)</b>	Below 25: 3 Above 25: 2	High School: 2 BA: 1, BA B Ed: 1, MA: 1	More than 1: All	OBC: 1, FC: 2 Muslim: 1 Christian: 1
<b>Sarat (6)</b>	Below 25: 5 Above 25: 1	High School: 3 BA: 2 MA: 1	More than 1: All	SC: 1, OBC: 1 FC: 3 Muslim: 1
<b>Tabiji (7)</b>	Below 25: 6 Above 25: 1	High School: 2 MA: 3 MA B Ed: 2	More than 1: 5 No Exp: 2	FC: 5 SC: 2
<b>Kishengarh (4)</b>	Below 25: 4	BA: 1 MA: 3	More than 1: 3 No exp: 1	SC: 1 OBC: 1 FC: 2
<b>Atru (7)</b>	Below 25: 6 Above 25: 1	B Sc: 1, MA: 2 MA B Ed: 3, MA STC: 1	More than 1: 1 No Exp: 6	FC: 5 OBC: 2
<b>Shahbad (6)</b>	Below 25: 4 Above 25: 2	BA STC: 1 MA: 4 MA Phy Ed: 2	More than 1: 1 No Exp: 5	FC: 3 Muslim: 1 OBC: 1, ST: 1

Source: Survey data, August to October 2003



The teachers were a storehouse of energy and initiative – they were exceptional in that they had the ability to work from early morning to late at night playing teacher, mother, sister and nurse to the girls. Since most of the teachers in all the BSS had more than one BSS experience they had adjusted well and understood the unique requirements of being a BSS teacher.

### Training of teachers:

The training programme is conducted at three levels.

- First – a foundation 30 day orientation programme for the teacher trainees before sending them to teach in the BSS,
- Second – an 8 day refresher course before the beginning of the next BSS for the experienced teachers and
- Third – in service academic support provided by the Master Trainers to help the teachers *in situ* to deal with the curricular and pedagogic issues of classroom teaching.

Almost all the teachers had participated in the 30-day training. It was initially planned as a 21-day course and increased to 30 days in 2002. While all the teachers said that they found the training useful, they admitted that it did not ‘adequately prepare them to handle the camp life situation.’ This training programme exclusively focuses on the ‘what’ of transacting the GPS curriculum up to class V. The orientation programme had a condensed curriculum to cover class V teaching. The two-volume set of a Teacher Training manual produced by the LJP provides the course content and the classroom teaching methods and these manuals were given to all the teachers. Teachers use the manual as reference materials. The Master Trainers took up selected subject wise topics from the class I to V textbooks and demonstrated its transaction in the training programme.

#### Box 3: Teachers on training

- *We were introduced to new methods and approaches in teaching.*
- *In my private school I taught the children through only method. In the training I got to know that there are various ways of teaching children, activity based methods where children learn faster . . . with concrete objects.*
- *If we teach according to what we have learnt in the training we will never finish the course.*
- *I learnt how to motivate the girls and build an environment in the classrooms.’*
- *During training they select the topics for us that we have to teach. We then on our own do a further selection, as we have to cover the syllabus.*
- *No one fully explained about the nature of the job, the culture and habits of the girls who were going to live with us . . . so it is a kind of shock for the first few weeks . . . may be the trainees do not want to scare us, some of us wanted to run away, but we needed the job.*
- *I have learnt to make new teaching learning materials and charts.*
- *I am more confident as teacher.*

Excerpts from meeting with teachers, Madhumita Pal, 2003

Teachers were appreciative of the usefulness of the training programme to equip them to teach. Another positive feature commonly recounted by the teachers was that the training programme provided information and demonstration on some of the child centred teaching methods such as children’s songs, environment building songs, use of story and drama and use of other creative mediums such as arts and crafts. These methods and the use of TLMs, which they had prepared in the teacher training programme, were found to be useful in teaching entry-level cognitive skills to learners in the BSS. The training did not provide an opportunity or the space to reflect on their social attitudes and culturally bound responses to





caste, class, disability and other forms of variance. Nor does it prepare the teachers for the challenges of working with a diverse group of first generation learners.

However a major concern expressed by the teachers and some of the programme managers was the short duration. Its duration was considered insufficient to cover the course content up to class V. Most teachers felt that the concepts and subject content of class IV and V didn't get the required time to be satisfactorily covered in the training period. The concepts and lessons that were not covered in the training programme were also left out during classroom teaching in the BSS. More often these were just read out to the children and the teachers provided ready-made answers given at the back of the lesson and the girls were asked to memorise them.

### Teaching and learning:

The government prescribed primary school curriculum was followed in all the camps. During the month long training orientation, selected lessons are demonstrated for teaching and the teachers handbook provides a weekly syllabus that consists of select chapters from the textbooks – with time allocated for completion of each level, as depicted in Table 12 below.

**Table 12: Time allocated for completion of each level**

Environment building	2 days
Class I	60 days
Class II	45 days
Class III	33 days
Class IV	30 days
Class V	30 days
Evaluation	4 days
Excursion	4 days
Result	2 days
210 days in a camp	

Environment building took a lot more time and in most cases the first two weeks were devoted to helping the students settle in and get into the rhythm of life in the camp. After an initial inauguration a considerable amount of time is spent on environment building like playing games, interaction with teachers, ice-breaking exercises – all attempts to familiarise the children with camp life. Children were divided into groups depending on the number of children enrolled. In Shahbad initially there were two groups of children. These groups were sub-divided into five or six groups that changed every alternate day, *'giving each child an opportunity to mingle with other children, getting to know each other and getting used to the schedule.'* Each teacher was assigned one group who would handle games, activities and story telling sessions. It is only in the second week those children were grouped according to their learning levels. The grouping pattern followed in all the camps was on the basis of 'intelligent' and 'weak' children. The progress of 'fast and slow learners' is monitored closely and the 'really weak' ones are taken out to form the last group. Moving away from the 'expected', teachers in Shahbad did not follow the usual pattern of 'teacher assigned to one group'. With some resistance from the officials, the head teacher with support from other teachers shifted to subject wise teaching. Besides this, after the weekly and monthly tests there is a constant shift of groups from higher to lower levels and vice versa. Such a clear process was not discussed in other camps where the groups remained fixed after the first month.



A short test of Hindi, Mathematics and English is taken on the second or third day. Children are also asked to draw. All these are recorded in separate files. Children's levels were gauged through these tests. The process of one month may vary from *shivir* to *shivir*.

Discussion with students revealed that approximately twenty to thirty per cent of the children were enrolled in formal schools but were either irregular or had never attended schools. These children were familiar with the written word and some were able to recognise alphabets and numbers. The rest of the children were totally unfamiliar with alphabets but the older girls were familiar with numbers and basic number operations like addition and subtraction.

Although the teachers' handbook prepared by the LJ office has comprehensively covered the teaching of the course content staggered over seven months, its transaction in the classrooms of the BSS was not systematically planned. It was left to the discretion and understanding of the teachers on how much to pick and choose from the given text books for teaching. Discussions with teachers revealed that they could not adhere to the timetable provided and the actual time taken varied from group to group. Teachers at all the five BSS complained of the curriculum load and the difficulty in making the girls understand the mathematical, science and social science concepts in an accelerated learning mode. Although specific numbers of days have been allotted for each class, interactions with teachers revealed that very little time is given to classes III and IV. Only selected topics are taught from the module. In language, for example, they start with stories, then move on to poems and grammar. There is a *'tendency to skip chapters in Hindi and concepts in mathematics, with the understanding that something similar would be dealt with in class V.'* Teachers felt they and the children were *'under constant pressure to finish the course'*. Ultimately their performance would be judged *'on how well the children fared in the class V examinations . . . their chances of being appointed or success of the shivir depended on how many children passed the examinations or succeeded in being mainstreamed into formal school.'*

#### **Box 4: How children learn? What teachers say...**

*Why children in BSS learn faster than their peers in formal schools:*

- Children who come to the camp are more serious about their studies
- Older children have *'better catching power'* than younger children
- This is the only opportunity for receiving formal education
- Teachers communicate with the children in their language
- We teach them 24 hours . . . they are constantly studying
- When children come to the camps they already have been to schools, even though it is for a short period . . . we just have to push and motivate the children . . . our role is like a facilitators
- Peer learning takes place especially in the night, children help each other with their homework
- Teachers live in the camps and are always available all twenty four hours to the children . . . we are like a friend, a mother and elder sister to the girls
- In camps teachers also focus on developing self-confidence and articulation
- Children are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Teachers pay a lot of attention in grounding the girls with basic knowledge; *'if the foundation is weak'* then children lag behind in subjects. Lot of attention is paid to slow learners
- Government school teachers are irregular, they do not come to school on time and the actual teaching time is very brief
- It is not right to compare camps with government schools as we try to cover five years course in seven months.

Excerpts from group discussions, Madhumita Pal, 2003



In each camp the study hours are initially limited to six hours. The children get used to longer hours after the third or the fourth month and more so with the approach of examinations. The children primarily read the textbooks. They are not introduced to or encouraged to read any other books. The curriculum and syllabus emphasis is on mastering the class specific competencies of minimum levels of learning – moving from one level to another. Most of the camps do not encourage children to work in small groups and the teachers do not use multilevel teaching techniques. Teachers have yet to develop the skill of designing activities and tasks for different levels in the same group or even keep them meaningfully engaged.

### **Classroom Processes**

Classroom observations were undertaken to get an insight into the practices followed by teachers. The field investigators were primarily engaged in observing pedagogic practices, child-to-child interaction, classroom management and so on. A total of 64 hours of unstructured, open-ended observations were undertaken in order to collate a representative sample of the classroom transaction process. An attempt was made to capture verbatim records of each classroom. At the end of the day the records were shared and corroborated amongst the research team and the entire teaching learning process was reconstructed.

### **Seating arrangements:**

The seating arrangement of the children is predominantly on the floor on durries or without mats. In all the days of classroom observation, the only seating arrangement observed was in rows with children facing the blackboard. In one camp, children used the four walls of the rooms as a backrest thus forming a rectangle and the teacher sat on the floor.

### **Language**

The specific activities observed were:

- Children are asked to write the letters of the Hindi and English alphabet. Teachers followed the traditional pattern *a – se – anar* for language learning. This is in sharp contrast to what is emphasised in teacher training modules that focused on the word method.
- Children are asked to learn answers to questions, letters of the alphabet (memorise an application for leave) on their own. This activity in effect is an exercise in rote memorisation, with little opportunity to think and use language creatively.
- Copying from the textbook
- Teacher reads aloud and students follow.
- Teacher wrote the meaning of difficult words on the black board. No effort was made to make use of the words in different contexts.
- Children asked to write essays on given topics (very few episodes of such nature were observed).
- The teachers expressed their inability in handling the transition of the usage of local dialect to standardised Hindi.



## Box 5: Teaching language

### Subject - Hindi

The teacher writes four words and their meaning on the black board, she makes the students repeat the words ten times each. She makes each student point out the words with her finger and makes them read aloud.

\* \* \*

The teacher then teaches them the use of ‘*matras*’ (vowels). She first writes the alphabet and adds matra for a and makes them read aloud. Then she asks them to copy it out on their slate.

\* \* \*

The teacher tells the students that she will be writing a question on the board and they have to write the answers on their slate. She then asks ‘Who makes a noise *choo choo*’?’ The children reply – ‘a bird.’

\* \* \*

The teacher writes a question on the board and gives them multiple choice answers. They are asked to copy both in their notebooks. They are asked whether woollens can be washed with hot water, soap, kerosene or detergent. Before the girls reply, she gives the correct answer - detergent.

\*\*\*

The teacher writes out an application for leave on the blackboard and calls girls one by one to read it aloud. She reads it herself and asks them to follow her. She begins with ‘To so and so’ and the class repeats after her. Similarly she says ‘Kindly grant me leave’ all the children say ‘Kindly grant me leave’ again and again. Some girls mispronounce and the teacher corrects them. This is how the students were taught to write an application for leave.

\*\*\*

After teaching Hindi, it was 11 am. The teacher rubs the blackboard and writes ‘English’ and starts teaching. She writes as she speaks. Mother means ‘*mata*’, Father (she has spelled it incorrectly herself) means ‘*pita*’, son means ‘*beti*’, daughter (again she spells it wrong) means ‘*beti*’. She constantly keeps repeating the words and writing. Students also repeat after her. By then it is noon and the girls go out to drink water.

\*\*\*

Most vivid memories of the teaching-learning practices were the group chorus sound of girls saying, “*Haan ji*” (yes madam) to the teachers’ habitual end line “*kyon teekh hai na*” (isn’t that so?) during the class room instructions and listening to the monotonous sounds coming in the corridors from the class rooms of *group recitation of multiplication tables*, spellings of fruits and singing of the popular English poem, *twinkle- twinkle little star*

\*\*\*

“*Pehle black board par bulwatein hain. Phir, slate par likhwate hain, aur phir oose note book main utarain ko dete hain.*” (First we speak aloud what is written on the black board, we then ask them to write on their slates, then they copy the same in their notebooks)

Excerpts from classroom observations, Vandana Mahajan, 2003

### Mathematics

The specific activities observed were:

- Children were engaged in writing number names;
- Children wrote numbers from 1-100. The teacher checked copies and asked the children to solve problems verbally. The entire class recited the numbers in chorus;
- Children are asked to learn multiplication tables;



- Children solved arithmetic operations of addition and subtraction. Teachers checked copies and only two gave any feedback on errors;
- Teacher gave arithmetical operations of addition and multiplication of fractions. The teachers asked only two children any questions;
- Teacher gave word problems and then asked the children to write it down on their copies;
- Teacher gave 3 digit numbers and asked the children to write place value of all the digits. Then the teacher called on the children to solve arithmetic operations of addition;
- Two children are asked to recite multiplication tables while the rest of the children repeated it after them.

#### Box 6: Teaching mathematics

The girls took out their mathematics books. The teacher was also seated on the floor. The teacher tells the students that she had taught them to memorise percentage and asked each girl to repeat it. Each student kept saying the same thing over and over again. Then she asks them to state the percentage in fraction form. The teacher tells one student that she hasn't answered and asks her to reply. She can't answer correctly. She asks all the girls to repeat the correct answer four times. One of the girls is asked to write it on the board.

\* \* \*

The teacher writes a sum on the board and purposely makes a few mistakes and asks the students if that is correct. They reply that indeed it is. The teacher then asks them to look carefully. Now one of the girls comes up and inserts a decimal point. The sum now looks as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} 4.67 \times 5 = 4.67 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline \\ \hline \end{array}$$

The teacher instructs the class to copy the sum. The girls begin to solve the sums in their notebooks. The teacher asks them which multiplication table would apply. The girls reply 'five times table'. They solve the sum and show it to the teacher, one at a time.

\* \* \*

The teacher explains the sum on the blackboard and asks the girls to solve it on their own. She corrects the copies of the girls who go up to her. She asks one of them to solve the sum on the board.

Excerpts from classroom observations, Madhumita Pal, 2003

#### **Teaching learning processes:**

Some of the major characteristics of the teaching learning process observed in the camps are:

- Classes are either held in the rooms or outside, underneath trees or out in the open. Most of the rooms were well lit and ventilated.
- Very limited teaching learning aids were hung on the walls – charts of the alphabet, fruits, fruits and animals, birds, days of the week and month and maps. All the charts are either ready made or made by the teachers.
- The learning environment was non-threatening and non-patronising. Teachers often used words of encouragement (*sabash*) when children gave the right answer. However, light beating and scolding was observed only in two camps.
- Children were observed to be understanding and enjoying the 'texts' which more often than not intimidates.
- A sense of competition was not seen among the children.



On the flip side:

- Communication of school knowledge and learning was by and large 'text-book' based. Questions asked in the class were related to only the lesson being taught and from the textbook.
- The blackboard is the main teaching aid used by the teachers. Charts and flashcards were used only during the initial weeks. Other innovative aides/TLM developed during training were hardly ever used.
- No attempt is made by the teachers to make use of the innate knowledge that children brought with them in the classroom.
- Near total absence of interaction or creative dialogue between the teachers and students. Multi-level teaching has not been adequately addressed.
- There was no attempt on the part of the teachers to promote peer learning.
- No independent learning activity was given to the children except for copying from the blackboard.
- Learning is mechanical and based on memorisation, answering questions asked by teachers. The classroom transaction sounded like a monologue.
- There was a lack of clarity and in-depth conceptual understanding of the subjects being taught.
- Disability or disabled children do not even find a mention in the voices of teachers.
- Teachers relate only to a select number of 'bright' children. They were seen giving more attention to 'bright' students than to 'weaker' ones; the former were also allowed more access to the teachers. We observed no effort to create a participatory learning environment wherein the teachers and children could work together.

It needs to be mentioned that the teachers do attempt to create a happy learning environment for the children in the camps. However the 'joy' of learning is limited to occasional songs or story telling. When it comes to learning exercises, teachers revert to the didactic mode with which they are more comfortable.

Observations of classroom processes reveals that the objective of mastering primary level competencies at an accelerated pace is being realised primarily through rote learning, drills and memorisation. Classroom processes continue to operate within traditional hierarchical structures in which the teacher is the absolute authority.

Pedagogic practices centres around a repeated drill – of repeating, memorising, copying, asking questions and seeking answers from children. The image of the learner is one who follows teacher's instructions, engaging in mechanical tasks of reading aloud and reciting multiplication tables in chorus and copying from the blackboard.

### **Continuous assessment:**

Continuous assessment of the girls' learning levels by formal and informal methods was a common practice in the BSS. Given the small class size and excellent teacher-pupil ratios the teachers were able to regularly monitor the learning levels of the girls. The students were given biweekly/weekly practice tests covering the current lessons.

Monthly and later six weekly test were conducted under the supervision of the block level BSS in charge (it is internal assessment for class I and II). Students are promoted to the next class based on their performance in these tests. Oral and written tests are conducted for class I and II while it is purely written from class III onwards. The test for Class III and above was conducted under the supervision of the BEO (Block Education Officer) in Pugal and Ajmer districts. However, this was not the case in the other BSS, where the BSS in-charge conducts/monitors the tests. In all the 10 BSS for class V the Block Education Officer conducts the terminal examination.





While all the 10 BSS maintain individual files for all the girls we found that they were updated regularly only in Pugal, Kishangarh, Tabiji, Atru and Shahbad. The records of the scholastic assessment were being maintained by the teachers in a set of monitoring registers that were provided by the LJP.

Some significant highlights of assessment of learning outcomes are:

- In a short time of five to six months more than 85 per cent of the girls had acquired the basic skills in the 3 R's but these skills were just about basic!
- Girls memorised and reproduced the lessons – many of them could recite the lessons even without the textbook!
- Copying was a common feature whether from books/black board or from each other's note books.
- Hindi vocabulary was limited as they spoke in their own dialect. The girls could follow the instructions but their comprehension of what they read was poor and so were their writing skills. Independent writing skill was the poorest of all the linguistic skills in all the three BSS.
- Majority of the girls knew simple mathematical operations of addition, subtraction and carry over. Competencies for multiplication, division and geometrical calculations were varied. Language comprehension of the statement of the sum was the first hurdle in their understanding and this was followed by the abstract ability to decide what operations to apply.

### What and how much are they learning?

This section summarises the learning achievements of the children in six BSS: Pulu Kheda, Parsola, Vas, Pugal, Sam and Sarat. Children who were in class/level IV were tested in language and mathematics. Before we engage in the analysis of field data, the attempt of assessing children's achievements needs to be put in perspective. With limitations of time, the design of achievements tests had to be rather minimal. In both the subjects the children were tested on simple reading, writing and arithmetic. However, in Language, children's abilities are much wider than just reading comprehension and writing. They include understanding a spoken language and using spoken language in various situations, using language for organising information and so on. Higher abilities like complex problem solving and critical thinking did not form part of the items tested.

Having said this, we decided to test only a limited a range of abilities. Also, a paper and pencil test was the only option. In each subject area it was decided to categorise children's performance into three levels: upper range (proficient), middle range (partially proficient) and lower range (not proficient). No marks were deducted for spelling mistakes as long as what the child wanted to write was obvious.

### **Mathematics**

The test as constructed, addressed the following three dimensions of mathematics:

1. Number and number operations tested:
  - ◆ Capacity to read, write and represent numbers
  - ◆ Conceptualisation of place value
  - ◆ Ability to perform arithmetic operations
2. Word problem consisted of questions that tested the capacity of children to solve problems involving one or two operations.
3. Geometry, time and measurement attempted to measure:
  - ◆ To identify shapes
  - ◆ To construct line segments
  - ◆ To convert time from one unit to another



- ◆ Understanding of weights and measures and currency

**Table 13: Performance in Mathematics**

<b>Mathematics (overall)</b>				
	Number of girls tested	Below 33 %t	34 to 59 %	60 % and above
Sam	25	4	9	12
Pugal	21	0	4	17
Sarat	15	2	11	2
Pilu Kheda	14	9	5	0
Parsola	14	5	5	4
Vas	10	8	2	0
Total	99	28	36	35
<b>Mathematics (Number and number operations)</b>				
Sam	25	7	12	6
Pugal	21	0	1	20
Sarat	15	3	5	7
Pilu Kheda	14	1	4	9
Parsola	14	8	2	4
Vas	10	8	0	2
Total	99	27	24	48
<b>Mathematics (Word Problem)</b>				
Sam	25	7	6	12
Pugal	21	2	9	10
Sarat	15	4	9	2
Pilu Kheda	14	11	1	2
Parsola	14	10	4	0
Vas	10	9	0	1
Total	99	43	29	27
<b>Mathematics (Time and measurement)</b>				
Sam	25	3	6	16
Pugal	21	1	4	16
Sarat	15	1	12	2
Pilu Kheda	14	7	5	2
Parsola	14	14	0	0
Vas	10	10	0	0
Total	99	36	27	36

Source: Learner assessment, Class IV level, 2003

Results were analysed on the basis of the three dimensions delineated above. This helped us get a sense of those aspects of mathematics that teachers think are important. It also enabled us to find out whether teachers deal with the entire curriculum in a comprehensive manner, because typically the mathematics curriculum as classroom observations indicates has been largely limited to number and number operations. Word problems are considered difficult and geometry and measurement are considered unimportant.

Table 13 presents the results for all camps for the three categories defined above. As seen earlier, children have on the whole performed rather poorly. In the category of number and



basic number operations 27 per cent of the children scored below the passing percentage of 33 per cent, 24 per cent were in the partially proficient range of 33 to 60 per cent and 48 per cent scored above 60 per cent. As seen in Exhibit 2 below, there are variations among the 6 BSS with Pugal recording better outcomes. In geometry and time, where children were expected to label basic shapes and draw line segments 27 per cent scored above 60 per cent - with significant camp-wise variations. The results were similar with respect to word problems where 43 per cent scored less than 33 per cent and 29 per cent scored in the middle range.

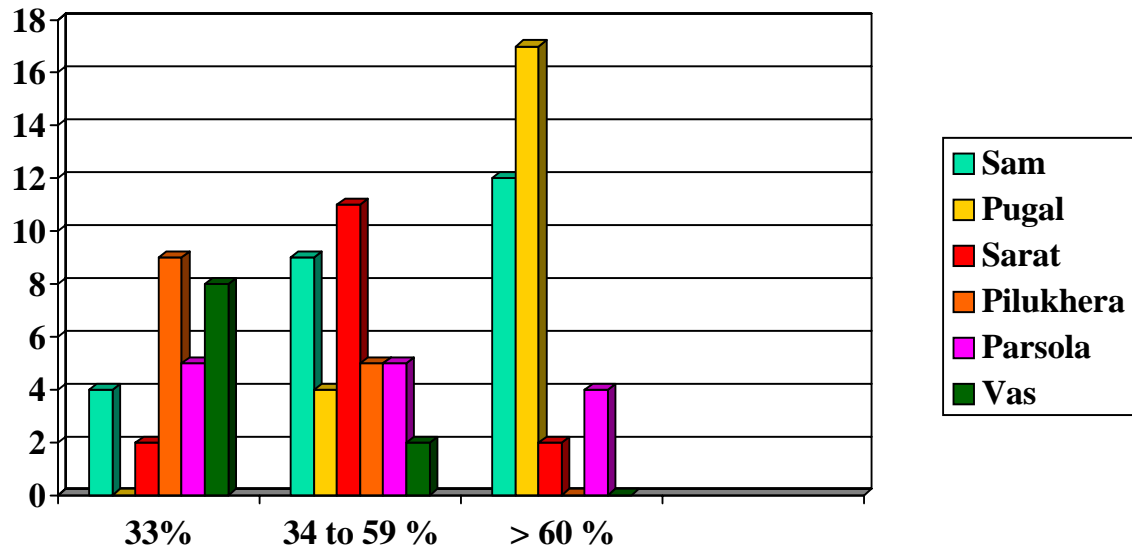
The poor performance of children in most of the (exception being Pugal and Sam) camps is a matter of concern across all the three camps. A large amount of time in mathematics classes is spent on doing formal sums. The emphasis is on drilling children on operational algorithms in a mechanical way. The age old 'obsession' with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums continues. Classroom observations substantiate the finding that teachers while teaching mathematics concentrate only on sums. The concept of place value has not been consolidated. The child knows that these numbers have to be added but he has no idea how to place them. Place value has been ignored.

The strategies adopted by children for solving word problems, adding and subtracting (who fell in the range of partially proficient and proficient) were: mental process, using finger or iconic representation such as tally marks. In one case a child used pictorial representation. However, it is disturbing that 43 per cent of the children scored below 33 per cent in word problems. If one examines the scripts written by the children, one finds that children do not know how to cope with the demands of the task. The explanations could be that: word problems are considered inherently difficult and therefore teachers shy away from them. They are thought of as applications of the operations, and are not understood in the context in which operations should be placed. The children are unable to interpret the language in word problems. If they were able to read with comprehension, they perhaps would have been able to solve the word problem posed. Unfamiliarity with the Hindi language could perhaps explain the lack of comprehension.

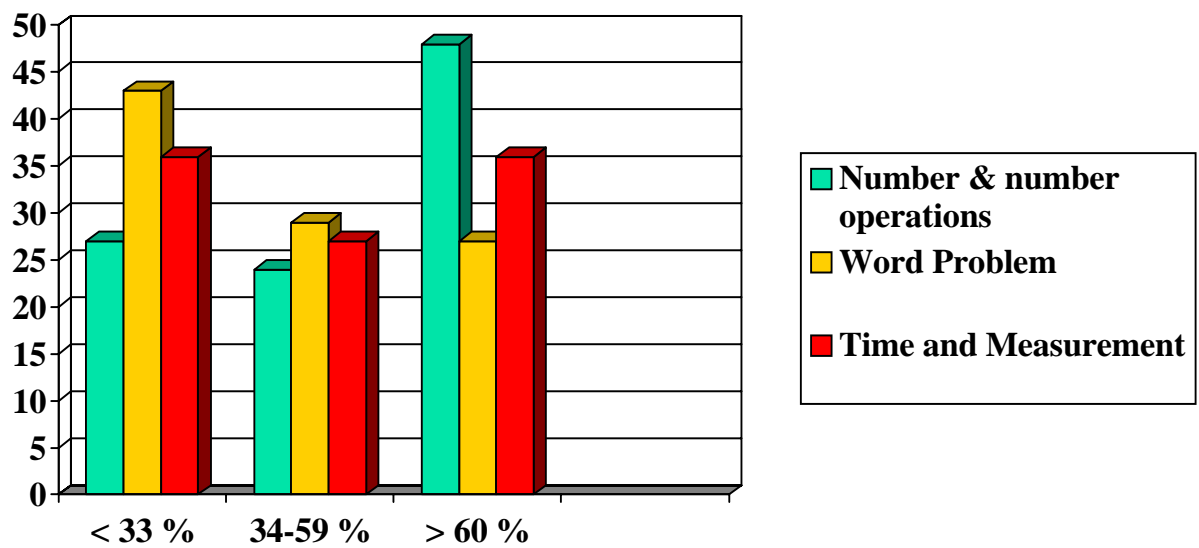
In geometry relating to time and space, the performance is even more dismal. Most of the teachers stated that: *'they have not given enough attention to this area. The entire syllabus cannot be covered in seven months. We only deal with selective topics, topics that we are confident to handle.'* Classroom observations too, have substantiated that the perception of mathematics is concerned only with understanding number and performing arithmetic operations.



**Exhibit 2: Overall camp-wise outcomes, Mathematics**



**Exhibit 3: Performance of children in mathematics competencies**



## Language

Class IV children were assessed on the basic functions of language, namely reading, writing and listening. A major skill weaving all three was that of writing as specified in the curriculum. For reading and listening comprehension, the material selected was from textbooks for class III.

- **Reading:** A piece from the text was given to each child to read. The child could keep and refer to the text if and when required. This is because the questions did not test memorisation. The difference between writing in one's own words and copying from the text was also an indicator of reading comprehension.
- **Listening:** The investigator read out the piece and there were two renderings of the text.
- **Creative Writing:** The objective was not confined only to test their skills and understanding of the form and technicalities of writing but also of creative expression.

**Table 14: Performance in Language**

<b>Language (overall)</b>				
	<b>Number of girls tested</b>	<b>&lt; 33 per cent</b>	<b>34-59 per cent</b>	<b>60 and above</b>
<b>Sam</b>	25	7	16	2
<b>Pugal</b>	21	0	6	15
<b>Sarat</b>	15	7	8	0
<b>Pilu Kheda</b>	14	3	8	3
<b>Parsola</b>	14	9	5	0
<b>Vas</b>	10	10	0	0
<b>Total</b>	99	36	43	20
<b>Listening comprehension</b>				
<b>Sam</b>	25	6	19	0
<b>Pugal</b>	21	0	5	16
<b>Sarat</b>	15	9	6	0
<b>Pilu Kheda</b>	14	8	5	1
<b>Parsola</b>	14	8	3	3
<b>Vas</b>	10	7	2	1
<b>Total</b>	99	38	40	21
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Sam</b>	25	12	10	3
<b>Pugal</b>	21	2	3	16
<b>Sarat</b>	15	2	12	1
<b>Pilu Kheda</b>	14	4	5	5
<b>Parsola</b>	14	13	1	0
<b>Vas</b>	10	10	0	0
<b>Total</b>	99	43	31	25
<b>Creative writing</b>				
<b>Sam</b>	25	13	10	2
<b>Pugal</b>	21	5	7	9
<b>Sarat</b>	15	9	2	4
<b>Pilu Kheda</b>	14	4	4	6
<b>Parsola</b>	14	11	1	2
<b>Vas</b>	10	10	0	0
<b>Total</b>	99	52	24	23
<b>Grammar</b>				



<b>Sam</b>	25	5	6	14
<b>Pugal</b>	21	1	8	12
<b>Sarat</b>	15	8	5	2
<b>Pilu Kheda</b>	14	11	2	1
<b>Parsola</b>	14	2	9	3
<b>Vas</b>	10	6	4	0
<b>Total</b>	99	33	34	32

Source: Learner assessment, Class IV level, 2003

As Table 14 indicates, overall performance in language is very similar to that in mathematics and the camp-wise variations are also significant as evident in Exhibit 3. Not a single child scored above 60 per cent in Sarat, Parsola and Vas.

The language test was sub-divided into four categories of reading comprehension, listening comprehension, creative writing and grammar. Questions designed to assess children's reading comprehension demanded the processing of information from within the text. The results indicated that 38 per cent students scored less than 33 per cent in listening comprehension 43 per cent got less than 33 per cent in reading comprehension and 52 per cent scored less than 33 per cent in creative writing. The creative writing test involved writing a few sentences on 'If only we had wings . . .' Many of them said that they

- Would fly far away
- Will go to a distant land
- Will not travel by bullock cart
- Would be like birds

Most children have expressed themselves in their local dialect

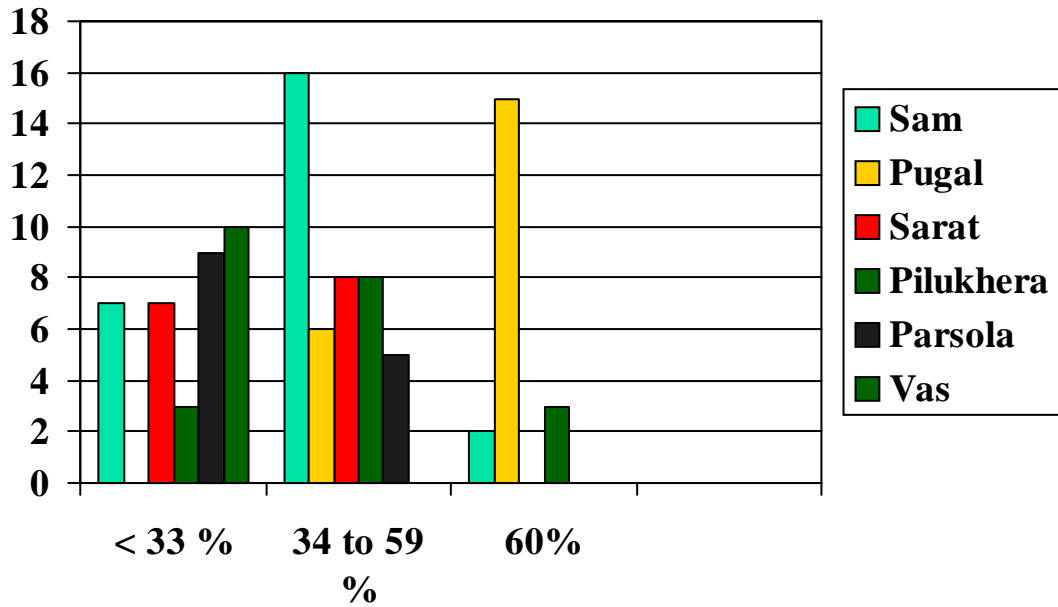
Results do indicate that the performance of children in general is 'poor.' Children are not able to comprehend spoken and written Hindi with proficiency. The scripts written by the children clearly indicate the use of their local dialect. Inability to comprehend spoken and written Hindi raises an important pedagogical question about the medium of instruction used in these camps. Classroom observations indicate that teachers use the local dialect in curriculum transaction. But teacher training modules and textbooks suggest the use of Hindi as the medium of transaction. The children are constantly expected to shift from their local dialect to standardised Hindi. However, what is not well articulated are appropriate approaches to help children move from the use of dialect to standard Hindi.

Children who are able to write have problems of syntax, punctuation and spelling; they have not yet reached a stage where they are familiar with the written language (this was observed in the written work of children who had passed out of these camps).

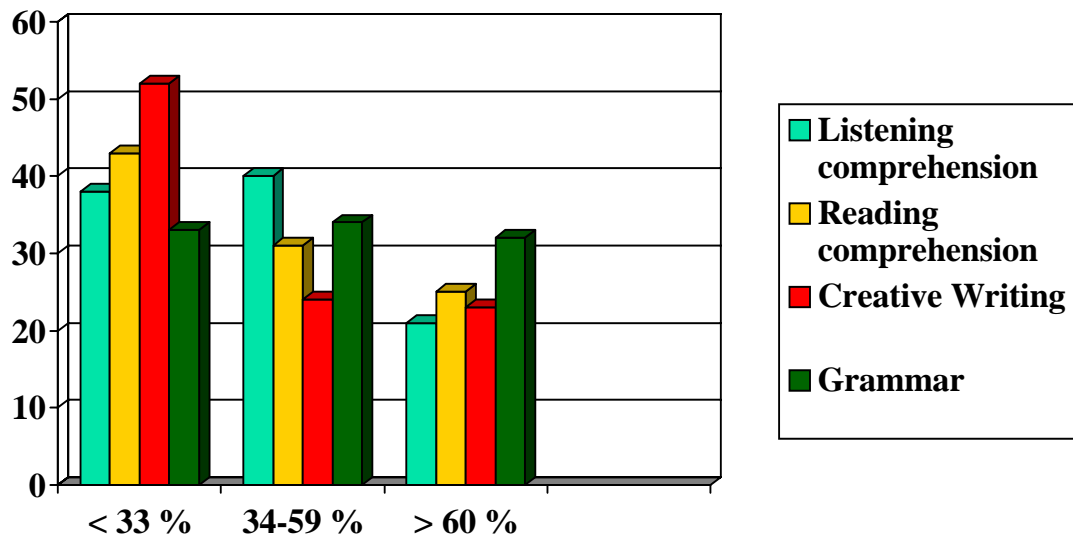




**Exhibit 3: Overall camp-wise performance in language**



**Exhibit 4: Performance of children in language competencies**



Though not originally part of the study design, children were tested for their skill in reading. While reading, the investigators noted the way children read, pronunciation of the words, whether they read with meaning or did they attempt only to decode the text. The table below indicates the different strategies used by children in reading a given text:

**Table 15: Reading Strategies in 3 BSS (N= 38)**

Read by joining each letter	12
Identifying/recognising individual alphabets	9
Read by joining each letter but made mistakes in <i>matras</i>	5
Read fluently	8
Could not read	4

Source: Learner Assessment, Class IV, 2003

An important indicator of the skill of reading is a comprehension of the text. Less than half the children could comprehend the given text. These were children who could read fluently and those who read by identifying or decoding each letter. Majority of the children were struggling with the mechanical task of decoding each word. Thus, for them the primary objective of reading was to decode rather than make any sense of the printed word. For such children the activity of reading remains meaningless. Children who focus on reading as a decoding activity without adequately comprehending the text may eventually become 'non-readers'. Teachers need to be trained in specific pedagogic techniques to address the skill of reading. It appears that a month long training does not seem sufficient to orient the teachers in this direction.

The teaching in the camps does not emphasise learning through direct experience, which simultaneously relates to the experiential knowledge children already possess. Classroom observations indicate that children's understanding does not form the starting point of teaching.

The different learning ability levels of children in the classroom are not adequately addressed. The proficiency levels of a majority of the children are low. Areas of learning difficulties continue. Skills of language, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and creative writing have not been sufficiently developed.

Classroom observations and assessment of learning outcomes indicate that the camps have a long way to go before they are able to adopt methods or innovative pedagogic practices for creating and sustaining the interest level of learners.

### Factors that explain better learning outcomes in some camps:

What explains the better performance of BSS children in some camps? There is no significant difference in the social background or educational status of girls, there is also no significant difference in the age profile or educational status of children (most of the girls were first generation school goers), qualification or training of the teachers. Exploring this issue with teachers, Lok Jumbish functionaries and within our own research team, the following factors that appeared to contribute to any positive deviance visible in Pugal and Sam is as follows:

- **First**, the overall environment encompassing infrastructure, cleanliness and quality of life contributes significantly to the learning environment. It is not surprising that the poor living conditions, unclean and unhygienic environment of Pilukhera and Vas led to girls going home frequently. In fact Pilukhera cannot be defined as a residential programme, students went home to bathe, to sleep and even to eat. The food procurement was given on tender to a contractor as a result of which the quality of food was poor; it was un-hygienically prepared and most important, not nutritious. Lok Jumbish Parishad informed us on 22 December 2003 (when we made a



presentation of the draft report) that the practice of giving food preparation out on contract has now been discontinued.

- **Second**, monitoring and academic support makes a big difference. The district LJ functionaries took great interest in both Sam and Pugal. Teachers were encouraged and supported by block and cluster personnel of LJ; the district head of LJ visited the camps regularly and ensured a caring and responsive administration. The teachers got regular academic support from LJ functionaries and from Master trainers. This was not the case in Pilukhera (Chittorgarh) and Vas (Udaipur) where district LJ functionaries did not show the same degree of involvement and the teachers were left to their own devices. In Sarat, 5 of the 6 teachers were away on 'training' and LJ Block functionaries were managing the classes! This was in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the camp when the teaching load was high and children were preparing for the terminal examinations. LJ functionaries were more concerned about making arrangements for the next batch of BSS camps rather than ensuring that the current one concluded well. Not a single child scored above 60 per cent in mathematics in Sarat, Vas and Pilukhera and not a single child scored above 60 per cent in language in Pilukhera and Vas.
- **Third**, given that most of the BSS students were from poor rural families, the care taken to improve the overall health and nutrition status of the students also made a difference. Initial check-ups followed by having a nurse or doctor on call, was mentioned as a positive feature by parents of children studying in Pugal, Sam and Sarat. The quality of the food in Pugal and Sam was good from the nutrition point of view. While sick children did receive medical help in Vas, Pilukhera and Parsola (as evident in Table 6 on Health and Hygiene), discussions revealed that the approach was one of managing illness rather than promoting overall health and nutrition. The food was almost inedible in Pilukhera and Vas and of average quality in Parsola and Sarat.

It needs to be noted that where the district LJ functionaries took interest the overall cleanliness and hygiene was better, there was ongoing academic support and most important, a responsive and caring administration helped to iron out small problems. For example, when a student did not come back to the camp on time after a festival holiday or a family function, the LJ functionaries in Jaiselmer and Jalore took on the responsibility to visit the home of the student and follow up. Conversely this task was left to the teachers in Udaipur and Chittorgarh, who have to either miss out on teaching for a few days or ignore the problem.

Let us take the example of Sam BSS where a highly motivated cluster level worker of LJ had enrolled the girls to the BSS on a personal commitment made to the parents. Mothers who visited their daughters in the Shivar would call him '*Varma*' (by name) and happily posed with him for photographs. They informed us that Varma camped in the villages to persuade parents to send their daughters to the BSS. Although he hadn't yet even crossed thirty years in his life, he took on the mantle of the benevolent big brother of the girls and the young teachers alike. He attributed his motivation to work in a difficult terrain like Sam to his inclination to work for the underprivileged in the society. He would address them as 'my sisters' and kept continuous contact with them and their parents. The BSS teachers drew a lot of support from him.

### 'Incidental' gains: non-cognitive outcomes:

Balika Shikshan Shivar has been able to achieve the near impossible, get girls out of defined roles, enable them to access education and give them a chance to re-claim a lost childhood. It has given young girls freedom (albeit for a short period) from the drudgery of work and sibling care. In the villages where BSS operates, the very fact that a group of young girls were



able to access education made a lot of difference – we heard several cases of delayed ‘Gauna’ (premarital ritual) and even marriage, no mean achievement in Rajasthan! Parents and community leaders reported that sending a few girls to BSS had a ripple effect; many more girls are now attending school. These young girls come back and cajole and bully their parents, neighbours and relatives to send their daughters to school. **It is indeed tragic that LJ views this as ‘incidental’ gain, when in reality this is indeed the most significant achievement of BSS.**

### **What did we observe?**

BSS children and former students were confident, articulate and could express themselves freely. They were not afraid of talking to strangers and in fact questioned us about what we were doing and why. The following observations were recorded in Focus Group Discussions and in personal interviews with teachers and students of BSS.

### **What the girls studying in BSS say:**

- Eating together, living together has made us aware of our sisters from other communities and castes;
- We know the joy of being young. They narrated endless stories of friendships games, quarrels, and bonding – with fellow students and with teachers;
- We are not afraid of school and we study without fear;
- We love sleeping on a mattress, bath daily, use scented soap, brush our teeth (not just with our fingers but with a tooth brush);
- Exhilarated with the idea of reading, writing, singing, dancing (Chetna Satra)...
- We are now free from the drudgery of housework;

### **Box 7: Notes from Focus Group Discussions**

We started our discussions with what the children did before coming to the *shivir*. Children worked hard at home and in the fields. Most of them were involved in survival tasks and household chores, washing clothes and dishes, working in the fields, collecting fire wood, cooking, looking after younger siblings and cattle grazing. Some of the older girls also worked as farm labour for which they were paid anything between Rs. 60 – Rs. 80. The money was given to their parents. A number of them had also worked in famine relief programmes along with their parents like ‘*patthar torne ka kaam*’ (pulverising stone at construction sites). This was the routine for most of the girls. Festival days meant more work and more cooking. They fasted on those days ‘*seven days fast on navratra*.’ The proportion of work done at home depended significantly on the parent’s occupation and the presence of elder brothers and sisters.

There were children who were enrolled in government or schools run by Lok Jumbish. But they dropped out because ‘*master-ji bahut pittha tha* (master used to beat us)’, household responsibilities or illness. Most children’s exposure was limited to either visiting relatives or nearby towns. ‘*Didis*,’ ‘*Sir*,’ from Lok Jumbish had informed their parents about the *shivir*. However some said there were girls in the village that had been to the *shivir*. They enjoyed hearing about the *shivir* from them. Some also mentioned that their brothers or a relative brought them to the *shivir* once their parents had passed away.

Girls loved the *shivir* life. There was a lot of fun, gaiety and laughter. We were told of endless stories of their friendships and bonding with other girls. They learnt new songs and poems in English. The ‘*didis*’ loved them ‘*payar se rakhte hain, (they treat us with affection)*.’ But at the same they said that ‘*didi hit them when we made mistakes, when we do not remember*’. Some girls also said that they did not like a ‘*didi*’ when she made them wash her children’s soiled clothes. Not all of them liked the food in the *shivir*, which they felt was ‘*not properly cooked . . . stomach did not get filled*.’ After lunch the girls played games – like *kho-kho*, *kabaddi*, *rumal dhor*, skipping and games they played in their village homes. The *didis* did not play with them. With them they only did exercises in the morning.

Field Notes, Madhumita Pal, 2003



### **What former BSS students say**

- Cherish the opportunity, have very fond memories, a lifetime chance, we enjoyed the experience and valued the opportunity.
- Want to come back to camp for middle and high school - girls who have not been able to enrol in or regularly attend formal upper primary schools were more vocal on the need for camps at the upper primary and high school levels. They also reported that the quality of teaching is superior in BSS, as compared to formal schools.
- We convinced parents and neighbours to send more girls to BSS and to schools. We noticed that the ripple effect was significant.
- We have problems coping with lessons in class 6, it is a struggle, but we are not worse off than the children who attend formal schools! While learning levels were fairly low, teachers in GPS were appreciative of the initiative and articulation shown by BSS students.
- We heard that an elder brother of two former BSS students had taken a room on rent in Sam village to enable his sisters to study in the local UPS. This family lives in a remote village of Sam cluster.
- The girls we interacted with reported that less than 50 per cent of their batch-mates actually enrol in class 6 (See Table 1.7 in Annexure I). They also informed us that all their friends wanted to enrol in formal schools – but poverty, workload, inaccessibility of UPS, dysfunctional schools (where teachers are irregular, thereby threatening the security of girls left unattended) prevented them from continuing their studies. Almost all of them said that they would definitely enrol in a residential school – if they had access to one.

### **What parents say...**

- No-cost and a short-term alternative for girls, it is free in a real sense. Our girls got free food, books and even medical care!
- This is a better option, our girls got 5<sup>th</sup> class certificate in 7 months instead of 5 years!
- Personal hygiene practices have improved, they insist on bathing everyday, wash hands before eating, pray before eating, they have taught us to filter drinking water through a cloth;
- Our daughters can read and help out with calculation; they are better than children going to the GPS;
- We visit our girls in BSS with gifts like shampoo sachets and perfumed soap. They all want to wear salwar suits (Punjabi pants worn with a long shirt) instead of wearing the traditional ghagra (long skirt and blouse);
- In Tabiji 15 parents brought their younger daughters for enrolment for the next camp on the valedictory function day of the previous one. The next camp was to be organised one month later;
- The maternal uncle of one of the BSS girls in Sam visited her very regularly and checked on her scholastic achievement. He made her read from a book, gave her sums to solve and then would meet the teacher and encourage her to keep up the momentum of learning and make his niece as intelligent as herself!



### Box 8: The situation in tribal areas

We had a few FGDs with parents and community members. The parents of BSS girls expressed concern about the poor facilities offered by government schools especially *'in the tribal areas where schools remain closed and even if they are open teachers do not come regularly . . . it is better not to send our daughters there.'* There is also a feeling that *'master sahib bacche ko pittha hain'* (teachers beat the children) and there is also visible caste discrimination as most of the teachers belong to the forward caste.

The shivir on the other hand *'is clean, spacious and each class has its own teacher.'* The teachers live in the shivir and love the girls like their own children.' Citing the reasons for sending the girls to the shivir, a majority of them pointed out that besides *pardna likhhna* (reading and writing), *'my girl would get proper nutritious food for seven months . . . because of famine there is no food in the house.'* The Lok Jumbish Karmiks often gave this reason for motivating the parents to send their girls to the shivir *'she will learn how to read and write . . . you do not have to spend any money, she will get better food than at home, it is free, we will provide her all the facilities like manjan (tooth powder), soap and oil.'*

Field notes, Madhumita Pal, 2003

#### What teachers say...

- When the girls came to the camp they were 'jungle' (wild)/unclean/smelly, they used to tear up mattresses and use them as sanitary towels, their toilet habits were unhygienic, Most teachers/LJ functionaries talked as if theirs was a civilising mission: *'look at them now, we have transformed them! They bath every day, there are no lice in their hair, they brush their teeth and most importantly they speak in Hindi! They can recite English poems!'*

#### What LJ functionaries say...

- We are proud of BSS, it is the crown jewel of LJ;
- A few (mostly district level LJ workers) said that it was indeed a big responsibility to take care of so many young girls; it is like 'sitting on a pile of ammunition that can explode anytime';
- Almost all the LJ functionaries echoed the feelings of the teachers, that BSS was a civilising mission;
- Above all, most of them were anxious about discontinuation of BSS in SSA.

### Box 9: Views of LJ functionaries

*Why so many girls want to join BSS?*

- There is no age restriction
- 5 to 8 per cent of the children come because they have already been to a shivir once
- Children are often taken out of the formal school and sent to the camp because of free food, boarding and lodging. Our Lok Jumbish Karmiks also stress this point as *'it becomes easier to bring the children to camp . . . we need a minimum of 50 or 100 to start a camp.'* Due to famine and reasons of poverty parents too feel that their daughter will be looked after well in the camp
- Parents bring their children to the camp in the hope that their daughters will get proper medical treatment
- Academic level and learning process is better than formal schools, teachers interact with the children all twenty four hours a day, they are more like friends

*Changes observed*

- Earlier the girls had unkempt hair and yellow teeth, now they are clean, get up on time, bathe everyday, rise in their self-esteem, confidence *'chere mein chamak aa gai, tarike se bath karte'*





- hain.* (their faces are bright, they talk respectfully)
- On the first day the girls do not even know ‘*how to sit, walk, talk and even climb the stairs, do latrine all over the place, . . . is very frightened, bites the teachers, steal each other’s things, we have to teach them everything*’
  - Girls can now speak in Hindi with the teachers, can recite English poems and sing songs from the book
  - Have become more intelligent, can introduce themselves and give the names of their village and parents
  - Friendship among girls, an emotional relationship and bonding between teachers and children

#### *Our role*

- In reality we are doing the work the Christian missionaries did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.’
- It’s a major responsibility . . . we get little appreciation
- ‘*Mere pas 300 larkien hain. Ek ek lardki atom bomb hain, mein barud ki dher par baatha huin.*’ (I have 300 girls under my care, each one is an atom bomb, it is like sitting on a pile of ammunition)

Excerpts from interviews with district LJ functionaries, 2003

### **What “community leaders” say...**

- Everything is free and five years of schooling done in 7 months, children learn to read and write. Even medical treatment is free!
- The best part of BSS is that there are no age restrictions, older girls can now get some education;
- Community leaders admitted that a few children were pulled out of the formal schools and sent to BSS because of free boarding, food, books etc. This was particularly significant during the last four years of drought when food was indeed in short supply.
- This is a secure place for orphan girls. In Jalore there were orphans from Gujarat earthquake, in Vas too there were a few orphans.
- We are indeed proud to report that our girls went to upper primary schools for the first time in Sam (Jaiselmer).

### **Box 10: One step forward many steps back**

It is 5 pm in the evening. We are sitting in Bhagirath’s house in a small village in Shahbad. His two daughters had been to the *shivir*. Despite opposition from his *Sheriya* community and his own people at home, he sent them to the *shivir*. He was very agitated when we met him. He found the experience of sending his girls to the formal schools a harrowing experience. He felt that in the *shivir* his daughters were well looked after. The *shivir* gave them food and clothes. The children had learnt to read and write, were clean and not shy of meeting strangers.

However, life after *shivir* has not been easy. The girls stayed in the hostel for fifteen days, but after ‘*raksha bandhan*’ they were sent back home. The school headmaster told him not to send his children, as they did not have textbooks. Earlier he had saved money from selling his farm produce and doing drought relief work to pay the fees of Rs 115 for each child. Now he does not have money to buy books for the children. He had approached the local Social Welfare Departments and even had gone up to Ganeshpura and Gadora but all his efforts were futile.

‘*My girls, can sign their names now because of the efforts of the camp, but cannot move any further in life. They are forced to go back to their old ways . . .*’

Excerpts from parents interview, Madhumita Pal, 2003



## Emerging issues - the positives and areas of concern:

### **The magic of BSS:**

As noted in the sections above, the curriculum and textbooks used in the BSS are the same as in the formal school system; the children also take the formal school examinations. How then do children learn quickly? *The real magic is mainly the condensed residential programme and in the overall environment.* Motivation levels of the children are high. Most of them said that they always wanted to go to school, but were denied that opportunity. Having got a chance, almost all the girls wanted to turn their world upside down packing in almost 16 hours of activities in one day. Unlike their homes, the children are surrounded with textbooks, charts, papers and of course each other. They practice their skills with each other, converting almost any and every activity to use their newly acquired skills. Many games they play are improvised to hone their newly acquired skills. It is almost as if the children have entered a new, almost unreal world. It is this intensive interaction with each other and with their teachers that enables them to learn and acquire skills at a dizzy pace. It is indeed notable that the actual teaching time is almost 6 to 8 hours a day. In addition the children spend a lot of their spare time teaching each other and doing their assignments. The teachers are available round the clock and ready to help anytime of the day or night. This is the magic of the BSS.

Equally, the most significant and the most tangible outcomes are the enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence of the girls. As the children settle down, interact with their peers, learn to read and write, learn to manage their time and most importantly gain the confidence to speak out – they transform slowly. This magic is palpable – parents admit that their daughters were transformed within a few months. The key to this is an atmosphere devoid of fear. The teachers play multiple roles: as surrogate mothers, a kind aunt, an elder sister and a grandmother too. The bonding between the children and the teachers is evident and perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of the BSS process.

### **Why seven months?**

Discussions with teachers, LJ staff and agencies associated with training/resource support reveal that there is really no logical explanation for stipulating the 7 month duration of the camp. In 1997-98, when LJ workers planned for a camp for girls after visiting M V Foundation in Hyderabad, the duration was around 3 months. There was little clarity on the objective of the camp – they were not sure whether it was being organized as bridge courses or as a mechanism to give older out-of-school girls a chance to acquire basic education. The second round of camps organized with UNICEF support in 1999 were planned as six-month camps. As LJ gained in experience, a decision was taken to ensure 6 months of actual teaching. This meant that the total duration of the camp should be 7 months to provide for vacations during festivals (Holi, Diwali and any other local festival when the parents wanted their children home).

As analysed in the preceding sections, seven months is indeed too short to attain class 5 competencies. The first two weeks are devoted to enabling children to settle down, get used to living together, learn the rules of community living with respect to use of common facilities, personal hygiene, keeping the place clean, getting to know each other and getting used to the schedule. This is also the period when children are grouped according to their learning level. Basic knowledge of alphabets/numbers and reading small words, mathematical concepts are covered over the next two weeks. Essentially, the first month is devoted to getting into the rhythm of the accelerated learning programme and becoming familiar with alphabets and numbers.

Subsequent weeks/months are devoted to enabling the children to attain class specific competencies, moving gradually from one level to the next. As they near the end of their programme, children are introduced to the world of examinations – building their ability as well as their confidence to take a public examination for certification and to enable them to



move on to upper primary or middle school. The last six to eight weeks are devoted to intensive preparation for the class 5 examinations – which is organised by the District Education Office.

### **Accent on memorization:**

As discussed in the preceding sections, the accent is essentially on memorisation and rote learning. While most of the former BSS students the 6 BSS (where we tested learning outcomes) could read, they did not always understand what they were reading. It was disturbing to note that play time was discontinued in the last 6 to 8 weeks of the camp and the entire system was geared to enable the children memorise the lessons – questions and answers, grammar, meanings of words, mathematical tables and so on. The BSS undergoes a metamorphosis; suddenly everything is focused on clearing the examinations. While acknowledging that parents exerted pressure for certification / getting 5 class pass certificate (an important motive force in the marriage market) other dimensions of education take a back seat. The students are groomed to memorise and repeat, not to learn and understand. They do not have easy access to storybooks and other reading material; they do not discover the joy of reading.

### **Pace of learning varies with age:**

Experience of BSS camps as well as similar camps run under the aegis of Mahila Samakhya Programme (Government of India) reveal that the pace of learning of different age groups is indeed different. The ability of a 9 or 10 year old is indeed different from that of older girls above 12 years of age.

Equally, experience has also shown that the proportion of younger girls who enrol in upper primary schools is much higher than older girls. In effect this means that for older girls this is perhaps the only opportunity. Given that the skills acquired in 7 months is indeed quite rudimentary, the older girls who do not enrol in formal school run the risk of relapsing into illiteracy – unless they have the opportunity to continue reading and using the skills they acquired in the BSS.

### **Overall environment: infrastructure, cleanliness, hygiene and nutrition:**

The loudest message emanating from this study is that the overall environment of the camp: infrastructure, cleanliness, hygiene and nutrition exerts a significant influence on cognitive as well as non-cognitive outcomes. Creating a conducive learning environment is as important as the actual teaching-learning process. As discussed in the section analysing the reasons for good learning outcomes in some camps, the caring environment partly explains the high motivation levels of students as well as teachers.

### **Continuous academic support:**

Comparing and contrasting the ten BSS covered in this study it is apparent that continuous academic support to the teachers is indeed a big issue. As noted in the preceding section on profile of teachers, most of the BSS teachers are young and inexperienced, even though many of them have more than one camp experience. Discussions with teachers reveal that they need continuous support from master trainers/LJ functionaries/resource institutions. Teachers found teaching language to a group that is not familiar with mainstream Hindi difficult. Some of them admitted that they could not communicate mathematical concepts. While some LJ districts are doing much better than the rest (Jaiselmer and Ajmer at one end of the spectrum with Udaipur and Chittorgarh being at the other) in terms of providing continuous support, this is indeed an area of concern.

### **Teacher training:**

Another area that emerged during discussions with teachers and resource agencies involved with LJ is the approach to training. The approach currently followed for BSS has been drawn



from LJ experience in alternative schools (Sahaj Shiksha Kendra) as well as the experience of Sandhan (the training agency) in the Shiksha Karmi Project.

- A team of experts (many of them were involved in developing training modules in Shiksha Karmi Project) developed the training module and this was handed over to Master Trainers for transaction. People who developed the module had little to do with the training process.
- The module itself focused on how the teachers could teach different lessons. We were informed that the master trainers proceeded chapter by chapter through a standardised training module with little scope for improvisation/adaptation to suit the specific situation in a given cluster or block. For example, the training process did not include mapping of the vocabulary of children. This emerged as a big issue in tribal areas and also among children from communities in desert regions where the dialect spoken is very different from Hindi.
- The module prescribes a uniform approach to children of all age groups – 9 to 11 age group as well as the older girls. For example the mathematical skills of older girls is much better than the younger ones and it is particularly developed among girls who were involved in work outside their homes (famine relief as well as non farm work). The training module does not provide the space for adapting it to different situations.
- LJ functionaries, especially in Ajmer, Jaiselmer and Chittorgarh admitted that the task of explaining the situation of BSS, the background of the girls and related issues was left to LJ workers. This was seen as being non-academic, therefore not central to the training. Where the LJ district coordinator was strong and sensitive, the process of initiating the teachers to the particular situation/circumstances of BSS students was done with care. However, where the LJ district unit itself was not so motivated or so involved this process was short-circuited.
- The training module is silent on how children learn, knowledge, non-curricular aspects of education, such as the problems of how to teach language to children whose mother tongue is not Hindi. The problem with the module is that it lacks a holistic approach to BSS.

### **Curriculum:**

As of now the BSS primarily focus on language and mathematics. Science and EVS is not part of the curriculum. This makes the educational experience incomplete. Given that a significant proportion of girls in BSS are over 12 years of age, it is unfortunate that health, hygiene, menstruation and related knowledge about the body are not being covered as part of the regular curriculum.

### **Dynamic learning groups:**

One of the worrisome features noticed in the BSS camps was that (with the exception of Sam and Tabiji) the groups formed were not dynamic. While the initial grouping was based on competency levels and by age, they tended to remain static through the duration of the camp. We can learn a lot from the experience of the Nalli Kali programme in Karnataka on how learning groups can vary in their skills in the study of language, mathematics and EVS. A programme where children are trained to identify their learning levels and move from one group to the other – depending on their competency level in each subject<sup>3</sup>.

### **Post camp follow-up:**

Another area of concern is the absence of any post-camp follow-up. This could partly be explained by the sense of insecurity prevalent in Lok Jumbish. The LJ functionaries are uncertain about their future and the fact that the project could be wound up/merged with SSA.

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<sup>3</sup> For more details on the Nalikali model see Vimala Ramachandran (ed) *Getting children back to school – case studies in primary education*; Sage Publications, New Delhi 2003.



It implies that they are not at all certain whether the district, block and cluster level functionaries will continue to work in the same areas after June 2004. Most of the senior LJ functionaries we met were aware of the need for follow-up, but expressed helplessness.

BSS students who have enrolled in formal UPS need some support. LJ functionaries in Ajmer and Baran said that periodic weeklong camps and creating a learning circle in villages or in upper primary schools for supplementary academic support would make a big difference. But they were helpless; the project itself comes to a close in June 2004!

## Recommendations:

### **Different models for different age groups:**

Given that LJ will cease to exist as an independent programme in June 2004 and that the models experimented with by LJ will be integrated into Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, there is an urgent need to re-envision the agenda for BSS. The goal has to be articulated and the fundamental agenda of the model spelt out. As discussed in the preceding sections the learning needs of girls in the 9 to 11 age group is different from those of girls who are over 12 years. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan could take advantage of two new initiatives of Government of India, namely: National Programme for Girls Education at the elementary level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Awasiya Shiksha Yojana (scheme for residential schools for girls). In this connection two separate models could be explored:

- **Short duration bridge courses for girls in the 9 to 11 age group** and help them enrol in formal upper primary schools. These camps could be organised for six months. Ensuring access to and regular functioning of UPS is a precondition for the success of this strategy. Equally, systematic follow-up programmes are necessary to provide academic support on a periodic basis (at least for the first two years after graduation) to ensure that the girls do not drop out.
- **Longer duration residential programmes are necessary for older girls** who have missed the bus. SSA could consider an 18-month programme to enable girls to reach at least class 8 or even class 10 level and also ensure that the reading/writing skills are complemented with life skills. This could either be done through the formal school system or through the open school system of Rajasthan. Combining the above with inputs in livelihood skills (non-farm self-employment opportunities, horticulture, agriculture and management of self-help groups) could be of immense value. This would not only make education relevant to the lives of young adolescents, but would also help us break the inter-generational spiral of powerlessness experienced by women in Rajasthan. Specific inputs are necessary to enhance the self-esteem and self-confidence of young girls to familiarise them with the development programmes of the government. SSA in Rajasthan could learn from successful programmes in other states, namely Namma Bhoomi of The Concerned for Working Children in Karnataka<sup>4</sup> and Jeevan Shals of SEWA. Equally, knowing your body and basic information on reproductive health could go a long way in empowering young women<sup>5</sup>.

### **Shared understanding of what we mean by quality education:**

As of now the achievements of BSS are measured only in terms of success in examinations and enrolment in upper primary schools. As discussed in the preceding sections, clearing the class five examinations is indeed a limited objective. We noticed that children memorise the

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<sup>4</sup> For more details see Vimala Ramachandran (ed): *Getting Children Back to School – Case Studies in Primary Education*, Sage Publications, New Delhi (2003)

<sup>5</sup> Nirantar, a Delhi based educational resource group has developed a 2 volume curriculum in Hindi on women and health for adolescent girls and young women. This is being used in Mahila Shikshan Kendra run by Mahila Samakhya in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.





lessons and do clear the class five examinations. However, reading and writing skills are quite rudimentary. Articulation of what we mean by quality education is perhaps the first step towards ensuring that the skills acquired in BSS are sustained, even if the children do not enrol in formal schools.

Rigorous curriculum development is called for. Selective adaptation of lessons from existing books is not enough. LJ/SSA could consider initiating a process of curriculum development based on expected levels of learning at each level. This is not to say that the textbooks should be jettisoned altogether. If we are serious about accelerated learning, then we cannot shy away from developing workbooks and other teaching learning material that can be used in BSS. After all, enabling children to learn at an accelerated pace requires more care and more rigour.

As discussed in the preceding sections of this report, the curriculum is silent on the non-cognitive aspects. The notion of good quality education needs to encompass both the cognitive as well as the more intangible non-cognitive aspects of growth and development. Education is not about clearing examinations but of developing the ability to think critically and to be able to comprehend not only what we read but also what we experience. Exposure visits and reading/analysing current affairs in newspapers and magazines could help hone analytical skills. Equally, access to fiction and other interesting reading material could help students explore a universe beyond their textbooks.

### **Selection and training of teachers:**

While the teachers we met and interacted with were quite exceptional, it is important to recognise that they could do a much better job with context specific inputs. Serious efforts need to be made to make the training more holistic. Systematic coverage of pedagogic issues for multi grade and multi level teaching, child-to-child learning methods and gender and social aspects specific to girls' education are essential.

Equally, ensuring the continuation of experienced teachers and enabling them to grow professionally. As of now, the BSS teachers are on specific 7-month contracts. They are not sure if they will be re-hired for the next round of BSS camps. It is indeed unfortunate that the programme lets go of experienced teachers. Building a four to five year plan for BSS could enable the government to retain experienced teachers.

### **Concluding remarks**

There is little doubt that BSS had made a difference in the lives of girls who had the opportunity to participate and also further the cause of girls' education in Rajasthan. If the government so desires, fixed-period residential education camps for girls can indeed help break the inter-generational cycle of low literacy among women in Rajasthan. Experience, albeit on a modest scale, has demonstrated that providing good quality educational opportunities to girls pays rich dividends to the family and to the society. Ensuring girls study up to the age of 16 or even 18 is the surest way to reduce the age of marriage, improve their self-esteem and confidence and promote role models in society. Such a model will be of immense value in remote and sparsely populated regions and among the poorest of the poor in the state. Educating adolescent girls may perhaps be the only way to put an end to the seemingly never-ending cycle of illiteracy, low age of marriage and low status of women.

SSA provides a window of opportunity. Can the experience of Lok Jumbish, in particular the experience of Balika Shikshan Shivir add value to Rajasthan's SSA strategy for achieving universal access to elementary education and bridge all gender and social equity gaps by 2007?





## ANNEXURE

### Annexure 1: Data

**Table 1.1: Balika Shikshan Shivir (3 month camp) of Lok Jumbish, 1997**

S.N.	Location of Shivir	Total Enrolment	Educational Level Achieved %				
			I	II	III	IV	V
1	Bikaner	100		Not available			
2	Bikaner	100		Not available			
3	Phalodi	100		Not available			
4	Pokran	100		Not available			
	Total		0	25	50	25	0

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003

**Table 1.2: Balika Shikshan Shivir (6 month camp) from January 1998 to December 1998**

S.N.	Location of Shivir	Enrolment	Educational Level Achieved					Total
			I	II	III	IV	V	
1	Bali (Lunava)	133	8		44	14	18	84
2	Pokaran (Ramdevra)	120		20	41	12	13	86
3	Desuri (Mundara)	120	18		14	21	40	93
4	Phalodi (Nihal)	126	4	9	30	33	23	99
5	Phalodi (Chhajalani)	112	6	13	23	24	40	106
6	Bikaner (Udairamsar)	150		,	24	14	72	110
7	Lunkaransar	124			22	29	49	100
8	Urmul Setu, Lunkaransar	254	7	8	41	56	44	156
9	Mahajan, Lunkaransar	150		31	34	46	14	125
10	Dantor, Bikaner	110			22	28	30	80
11	Chohtan	122	4	16	18	13		51
12	Simalwara	119		11	10	28	32	81
13	Nokha	136		13	14	16	60	103
14	Abu Road	126	9	29	18			56
			56	150	355	334	435	1330
		Percentage ⇒	4.19	11.58	26.76	24.96	32.51	

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003

**Table 1.3: UNICEF Aided BSS (6 month camp) January to July 1999**

S.N.	BLOCK	Educational Level Achieved					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
1	Bap	-	17	19	17	45	98
2	Osian	-	4	21	24	58	107
3	Lunkaransar	-	-	16	16	68	100
4	Kolayat	-	9	16	27	50	102
	Total		30	72	84	221	407
	%	0.00%	7.00%	17.60%	20.60%	54.20%	

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003



**Table 1.4: UNICEF Aided BSS (6 month camp) January to July 1999**

S.N.	BLOCK	No. of Girls	Educational Level Achieved					Total
			I	II	III	IV	V	
1	Phalodi	49	-	-	16	5	28	98
2	Bikaner	60	-	-	-	-	60	120
	Total	109			16	5	88	218

Source: Lok Jumbish Parishad, December 2003

**Table 1.5: Reasons for dropping out in 5 BSS**

BSS	Initial enrolment	Currently enrolled	During field visit	Reasons for dropping out
Sam, Jaiselmer	193*	80	74	Missing home; pulled out to do wage labour; marriage, illness, older girls responsible for their younger siblings, parental unwillingness. Only 1-2 girls had come from one village, girls from a Hindu dominated village went back because most BSS girls were Muslim
Sarat, Jalore	167*	96	75	Home sickness and unable to adjust to the BSS routine, being too young or rebellious to the liking of the BSS organisers; marriage, parental unwillingness
Pugal, Bikaner	136	98	98	Girls looking under-age (below 11) according to teachers, sickness and inability to adjust to the BSS routine; physically challenged-couldn't adjust; marriage
Kishengarh Ajmer	78	54	54	Chronic illness; inability to adjust to the BSS routine, unwilling in laws or parents
Tabiji, Ajmer	139	105	105	Illness; inability to adjust to the BSS routine

Source: Field notes of Vandana Mahajan, 2003

**Table 1.6: Weight monitoring table of 20% in 3 BSS**

B.S.S	No. of girls	Weight monitoring (increase or decrease in weight in kilograms)				Remarks
		1-2	2-3	4+	Went Down	
Sam^	43	40	1	1	nil	The BSS had a primary medical kit and it had a good rapport with the local ANM and the PHC. Although the weight was recorded in the registers every month the height wasn't measured during the course of the shivir.
Sarat ^	33	14	-	3	2	Weight of 14 girls remained static. Weight was recorded in the register every two months but the height was measured once at the entry point in the shivir. The register didn't carry any observations on the general health and common ailments experienced by the girls during their stay in the shivir.



Pugal ^	25	7	8	6*	1	*One girl gained 14 K.Gs during her stay in the camp. Weight of the girls was recorded every alternate month and height at entry point and thence after three months. ANM of the area comes regularly to the shivir and a health check up by two NGOs has also been provided
Total	101	61	9	10	3	

# Since the BSS in Tabiji and Kishangarh had been running for only a month therefore the increase or decrease in weight of girls wasn't recorded.

^ In all the three BSS many girls and teachers were affected by the prevalent eye flu during the month of July and August.

**Table 1.7: Educational status of the former BSS students from Bikaner district**

No	Former BSS students	In class VI and above	Drop out after class VI/VII	Drop out after the BSS
1	28	10	2	16
2	20	5	-	15
3	10	1	-	9
4	18	8	-	10
5	28	20	2	6
6	37	16	1	20
7	15	10	-	5
8	9	6	-	3
9	5	4	-	1
10	21	14	-	7
11	54	18	-	36
12	22	9		13
13	9	1		8
14	12	11		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>150</b>

**Table 1.8: List of Teaching Learning and other Materials in the Camps\***

Teaching and learning material	Personal items	Other items
Blackboard	Mirror	Mattress
Copies	Cotton	Pillows
Books	Ribbon	Fans
Pencils	Comb	Wall clock
Pens	Thread	Plastic glasses
Rubber	Rubber band	Durries
Sharpener	Nail cutter	Petromax
Globe	Needle	Dancing bells
Geometry box	Blade	Dholak
Maps	Thread	Torch
White and coloured chart paper	Buttons	Mug
Scale / Ruler	Scissors	Phenyl
Markers	Rubber ring	Acid
Nails	Football	Soap
Candle	Carom board	Brooms
Blackboard colour	Skipping rope	Plates
Coloured pencils	Badminton racket	Buckets
Sketch Pens		Medical kit



Markers		Candles
Card sheet		Batteries
Water colours		Tea mugs
Ruled and blank paper		Kerosene
Geometry box		Soap cases
Painting brush		Plastic tray
Thermocole sheets		Washing brush
Carbon		Blankets
Rim paper		Tea kettle
Slate		Sintex tank
Cutter		Steel tanks
Gum and glue sticks		Lock
Fevicol		Lantern
Files		Bed sheets
Registers		Plastic buckets
All pins		Razai
Cello tape		
Paint brush		
Globe and map		
Card sheet		
Slates		
Water colour		
Carbon paper		
Registers		
Plastic file covers		
Blackboard		

Source: Survey data August to October 2003

**Table 1.9: Charts prepared by teachers**

Charts of Hindi and English language alphabets
Number counts 1 -100
Names of fruits
Names of birds
Names of animals
Names of flowers
Essay on cow
Essay on school
Place value
National animal and flower
National anthem
Names of colours
Hindi matra charts
Signs of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
Ascending and descending order
Geometrical shapes
Multiplication tables
Sayings of national and religious leaders
Means of communication
Barakhadi (Chart showing all the alphabets along with matras)
Proverbs
Names of parts of body
Application for leave to Headmaster



Names of days of the week in Hindi and English
Scenic paintings
Names of days of month in Hindi and English
Names of groups in the camp
Names of President, Prime Minister, Chief Minister, Sarpanch
Timetable
Names of BSS teachers

\*The charts varied from camp to camp



## Annexure 2: Qualitative Research Tools

### Selection of the study area:

According to Lok Jumbish Project Officers (Meeting held in LJ Office on 9 July 2003) the following BSS (started in February-March 2003) will conclude by the end of September / October 2003:

District	Location of BSS	Number of girls enrolled
Bikaner	Pugal	114
Chittorgarh	Badi Sadri	104
	Gangrar	63
	Pratapgarh (4 camps)	268
Jaisalmer	Sam – NGO Sam - BSG	169
Jalore	Ahore	104
	Jalore	106
Jodhpur	Luni	53
	Bilara	112
	Bhopalgarh	60
Udaipur	Dharyawad (3 camps)	360
	Kotra (2 camps)	254
	Sarada	100
5	20	1867

Given the limited number of currently running BSS we plan to select one each from all the 5 districts and one additional one from Udaipur for the first phase of fieldwork. The first batch of BSS selected for in-depth study is given below:

1. Team 1: Madhumita (August 23 to September 5)
  - a. Dharyawad, Udaipur
  - b. Kotra (Tribal / NGO), Udaipur
  - c. Pratapgarh (Tribal), Chittorgarh
2. Team 2: Vandana (August 25 to September 7)
  - a. Ahore, Jalore
  - b. Pugal, Bikaner
  - c. Sam (NGO), Jaisalmer

After perusal of the list of BSS commencing in September 2003, two districts were identified for inclusion in Phase 2 of fieldwork: Baran and Ajmer, and 4 BSS were selected, namely:

1. Tabiji and Kishengarh in Ajmer
2. Atru and Shahbad in Baran

### Checklist of issues to be covered:

- 1) BSS Profile – data and narrative
- 2) Information from health register
- 3) Classroom observation:
  - a) Seating arrangements
  - b) Basic infrastructure facilities
  - c) Teacher – pupil interaction
  - d) Teaching learning materials
- 4) Accelerated learning (method of teaching, group learning, child to child learning and interaction) – Based on observation
  - a) Home work/assignments
  - b) Child to child interaction





- c) Group learning
- 5) Group activities with children – Ice-breaking as group activity
- 6) Informal chat with all BSS teachers – during lunch on day 1
- 7) In-depth interview with one teacher – day 2
- 8) In depth interview with supervisor/academic support – BSG
- 9) Learning outcomes – testing Hindi and Maths – class 2 and 4
- 10) Discussion with parents of BSS children in a nearby village.
- 11) Informal discussion/interview with a local Panchayat leader.
- 12) Collect interesting experiences of individuals (girls, teachers, parents or any one connected with BSS students)

#### Block and District level:

- (1) Interview with Resource agency/Master Trainers
- (2) LJ Block level functionary/DPC

#### Field work schedule

Research tools	Activity	Time	Persons
<b>Day One</b>			
Fill the format for BSS Profile	Fill out the format after observation/interviews	1 hour in the beginning will be ongoing till the end of the day	All three team members doing different activities
Health format to be filled out	Take from health register	1. 30 hours	Team leader + 1 FI
Ice-breaking activities	Informal conversations with students and teachers explaining why we are there etc.	During lunch break	Entire team
Classroom Observations	1 period in level 2 , 3 and 4	2 to 3 hours morning and afternoon	All three – different classes
Planning for the next day	Request teacher to help team meet one/two parents in neighbouring village Request DPC to send the Block in-charge to the BSS		Team leader
Group activities with children	In small groups/informal	Evening (pre-dinner)	2 FI
<b>Day Two</b>			
Interview with teachers	1 teacher detailed interview – given preference to the one who lives in the BSS	1 to 2 hours needed	Team leader
Testing of children	Hindi Mathematics	Minimum 2 hours – one first activity in the morning and one in the evening	Team leader and 2 FI
Creative activity with children		2 hours, preferably in the evening	2 FI
<b>Day three</b>			
Interview with parent	Go to a nearby village	1 to 2 hours	Whole team
Informal discussions with former students of BSS	If available to meet in nearby villages	2 to 3 hours	FIs



Go to a formal school to talk to teachers and children who studied in the BSS	In a nearby village – which has admitted BSS students	1 hour	Entire team
Interview Panchayat leader	In a nearby village	1 hour	Team leader
<b>Move on to the next BSS</b>			

## Research tools

### **Building a profile of the BSS visited (for all 10 BSS):**

No	Information to be collected	Format in which information should be collected / compiled		
1.	Basic information to be collected:	Collect the actual numbers/where necessary describe using the format given below		
2.	Enrolment: Number of girls enrolled Number of girls currently studying in BSS – on days of field visit	Age	Social Group	Educational level on entry
3.	Teachers: Number of teachers	Age	Social Group	Educational level Trained/Not trained
5.	Extra-curricular profile of BSS students:			

### **Format for collecting information on BSS:**

**Name of BSS**

**Location:**

**Date of commencement of BSS:**

**Facilities:**

- Facilities available: toilets, water, bathing space, kitchen
- Living arrangements for students
- Living arrangement for teachers
- Library
- Teaching/learning material
- Sports facilities
- Any other facilities/equipment (like cycle)

**Number of teachers:**

**From the school register:**

**Date of visit:**

Age group	Total Girls	SC	ST	OBC	Minority	Handicapped	Total
6+ to 8							
8+ to 11							
11+ to 13							
13+ to 15							



15 +							
Total							

**Records of height / weight monthly from Health Register (20 per cent sample from BSS register – approximately 20 girls, pick every 4<sup>th</sup> girl in the register):**

Name	Age	Height Month			Weight Month				Illness	
		1	3	6	1	3	4	6	Yes/No	Remarks

### **Classroom Observation Checklist (in all 10 BSS):**

#### **1) On arriving in the BSS start with observation.**

a) Stage 1 (30 minutes): Just walk around/sit in a classroom and observe the teacher, the children, and the overall environment - absorb the atmosphere. The following issues need to be observed:

- How children are sitting – categorisation/grouping
- Cleanliness of the classroom.
- BSS infrastructure – describe (Pucca, kuccha, state of the building – take a photograph with permission – this will be used for analysis and will not be published or otherwise publicised) checklist to look at – building, number of rooms, toilets, water source, bedding, place for washing clothes/bath.
- Food – lunch / dinner – when it is served, what is the distribution/sitting arrangements, who cooks it and the menu.
- Are there any disabled children in the class, if so describe.

b) Stage 2 (go and observe children sitting in 3 different groups – levels 2, 3 and 4)::

- Observe the teacher – whom does she communicate with – asking questions etc. Her/his eye contact with children (all, few – if so who and their characteristics). Who is chosen for activities, to come to the board, recite a poem or rhyme etc.
- Teaching learning materials/availability of textbooks/library – where it is kept, children's access to it etc.
- Browse through the TLM and note down what is available in the BSS – make a list.
- Teaching methods – explore what is the accelerated learning method – what is the magic of 7 months?
  - (1) Child to child learning
  - (2) Assignments
  - (3) Group learning

### **Ice breaking activities (All 10 BSS):**

1. Informal discussions with children - collect a group of girls during lunch break and informally chat with them about the BSS.
2. Informal discussions with the teachers (Ice-breaking):
  - c) When did they join, where do they come from?
  - d) How did they hear about BSS?

### **Testing learning levels (Only in the first batch of 6 BSS):**

1. Formal testing of learning levels: This will be done with a random sample of girls (every 4<sup>th</sup> girl from the enrolment register). The following areas will be included and the tests



will be pitched at grade 4 level in the first group of BSS covered in August-Sept 2003. At grade 1 or 2 (this will be modified according to date of commencement of BSS) level in the BSS covered in October 2003.

- e) Reading
- f) Listening
- g) Creative writing – short sentences / paragraphs.
- h) Mathematics

### **Group activities with BSS girls (All 10 BSS)**

**Divide all the BSS girls into 3 groups – up to 11 years, 11-12 years and 13+ age group and initiate the following activities:**

1.	What do you do in BSS – draw with charts the activities from morning to bed time
a.	What do you like best?
b.	Is there anything that you intensely dislike?
2.	Learning and ability
a.	What did you learn in the last one-week?
b.	Singing together.
3.	What games do you play in BSS?
4.	What will you do when you finish the course in BSS?
a.	Write out what children say – exact words and then classify them with the help of children?

### **In-depth interview with 1 BSS teacher (All 10 BSS):**

No	Questions to ask/explore	Categories	Remarks
1	Name		
2	Age		
3	Caste/community		
4	Name of BSS, location		
5	What are your responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching</li> <li>▪ Food related</li> <li>▪ Hostel security related</li> <li>▪ Mothering/comforting related</li> <li>▪ Cleanliness</li> <li>▪ Health related</li> <li>▪ Administrative</li> <li>▪ Other duties</li> </ul>	
6	Qualification		
7	Which is the last training workshop you attended.		
8	Was it useful to you, if yes, in what way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Note down the response in detail – do not prompt.</li> </ul>	
9	Do you live in the BSS – If not, record the time spent in travelling and mode of travel		
10	Which caste/community/economic status children come to BSS		
11	Which caste/community/economic status children do not come to BSS		
12	Performance of children in the BSS Are there any differences among the girls – explore age, exposure to schooling, caste/community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transition from one level to the other, readiness to successfully complete grade 5</li> </ul>	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examination</li> <li>Participation in activities</li> </ul>	
13	Have any girls dropped out from this batch.		
14	Explore reasons for drop out and list them by social group and gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This should be open-ended and do not prompt response on possible reasons.</li> </ul>	
15	Do you interact with the parents of the children who come to BSS		
16	If yes, what kind of interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Punctuality</li> <li>Achievement</li> <li>Nutrition</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Cleanliness</li> <li>Attitudes</li> </ul>	
17	Are there any formal forum for interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VEC</li> <li>Mother's group</li> <li>Panchayat</li> <li>Others (specify)</li> </ul>	
18	What are the responsibilities of these committees/groups		
19	Are there any children with disability in the BSS?		
20	How many and what is the nature of disability		
21	What is the system of assessment used in the BSS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Weekly tests</li> <li>b. Periodic tests/examinations</li> <li>c. Continuous assessment (record the method)</li> </ul>		
22	What is the criteria for promoting a child from one grade to the next (explore reliance on formal tests/scores or other informal means)		
23	Do you get any academic/back-up support from the Block/District/Resource agencies or persons?		
24	If yes, give details		
25	If no, explore if the teacher feels such support is necessary and what would they like.		
26	Do you have teaching/learning materials? Explore adequacy/quality/content of the TLM supplied to BSS.		
27	Do you have a library – explore usage and popularity?		
28	What is the monthly expenditure – from the beginning up to the time of fieldwork? (Note down what is the budgeted amount and the expenditure – this will then be cross-checked with the LJ state office)		
29	How much do you spend per child on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Educational materials</li> <li>b. Health care</li> </ul>		



	c. Food and nutrition d. Sports and games e. Extra curricular activities f. Examinations g. Others		
30	Have you noticed any appreciable change in your students in the last 6 months – since they joined BSS?	Do not prompt answers – leave it open-ended and record what ever they report.	
31	Is there any change in the attitude of parents – over the duration of the BSS?	Do not prompt answers – leave it open ended and record what ever they report	
32	Is the quality of education in BSS comparable to that of formal schools? If yes, why/explain If no, why/explain		
33	If you are given a chance, will you enrol as a BSS teacher again?		

### **In-depth interview with BSG functionary (in-charge of the BSS)**

Interview with BSG functionary in-charge of BSS– schedule to be made after preliminary discussion with one BSG functionary:

No	Questions to ask/explore	Categories	Remarks
1	Name		
2	Age		
3	Caste/community		
4	Location:		
5	What are your responsibilities	Training Academic Support Monitoring/supervision Data gathering/compiling Any other	
6	Qualification		
7	How do you select BSS teachers?		
8	What is the training routine		
9	What is your role in training and capacity building of BSS teachers		
10	Which caste/community/economic status children come to BSS		
11	Which caste/community/economic status children do not come to BSS		
12	Performance of children in the BSS Are there any differences among the girls – explore age, exposure to schooling, caste/community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transition from one level to the other, readiness to successfully complete grade 5 examination</li> <li>▪ Participation in activities</li> </ul>	
13	Have any girls dropped out from the current batches in BSS that you are supervising.		
14	Explore reasons for drop out and list them by social group and gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This should be open-ended and do not prompt response on</li> </ul>	





		possible reasons.	
15	Do you interact with the parents of the children who come to BSS		
16	If yes, what kind of interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance</li> <li>▪ Punctuality</li> <li>▪ Achievement</li> <li>▪ Nutrition</li> <li>▪ Health</li> <li>▪ Cleanliness</li> <li>▪ Attitudes</li> </ul>	
17	Are there any formal forum for interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VEC</li> <li>▪ Mother's group</li> <li>▪ Panchayat</li> <li>▪ Others (specify)</li> </ul>	
18	What are the responsibilities of these committees/groups		
19	Are there any children with disability in the BSS?		
20	How many and what is the nature of disability		
21	What is the system of assessment used in the BSS: d. Weekly tests e. Periodic tests/examinations f. Continuous assessment (record the method)		
22	What is the criteria for promoting a child from one grade to the next (explore reliance on formal tests/scores or other informal means)		
23	Do you provide any academic/back-up support to BSS teachers?		
24	If yes, give details		
25	If no, explore if they feel teachers need such support.		
26	What kind of TLM do BSS use? Explore adequacy/quality/content of the TLM supplied to BSS.		
27	Do the BSS have a library – explore usage and popularity?		
28	What is the monthly expenditure?		
29	How much does an average BSS spend per child on: h. Educational materials i. Health care j. Food and nutrition k. Sports and games l. Extra curricular activities m. Examinations n. Others		
30	Have you noticed any appreciable change in BSS children – from the time they enrolled to their graduation?	Do not prompt answers – leave it open-ended and record what ever they report.	
31	Is there any change in the attitude of parents – over the duration of the BSS?	Do not prompt answers – leave it open ended and record what ever they report	



32	Is the quality of education in BSS comparable to that of formal schools? If yes, why/explain If no, why/explain		
33	Is the quality comparable to formal school?		
34	Is quality of education better than formal schools?		

### **Open ended interview with District functionary (in-charge of BSS)**

Explore their role in setting up and monitoring BSS; explore academic support and also equivalency issues.

### **In-depth interview with master-trainer/resource person:**

Interview with trainer/resource person who was involved in training/capacity building – schedule to be made after preliminary discussion with one trainer/resource person

No	Questions to ask/explore	Categories	Remarks
1	Name		
2	Age		
3	Caste/community		
4	Location:		
5	What are your responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-service training</li> <li>▪ Ongoing academic Support</li> <li>▪ Any other</li> </ul>	
6	Qualification		
7	What is your role in training and capacity building of BSS teachers		
8	When were you trained to become a MT?		
9	What is the duration of training for new BSS teachers and what is the duration of refresher courses?		
10	Is the time adequate?		
11	Is the training curriculum suited to the needs of BSS teachers?		
12	Do you maintain regular contact with BSS teachers after the training programme		
13	Performance of children in the BSS Are there any differences among the girls – explore age, exposure to schooling, caste/community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transition from one level to the other, readiness to successfully complete grade 5 examination</li> <li>▪ Participation in activities</li> </ul>	
14	What is the system of assessment used in the BSS: g. Weekly tests h. Periodic tests/examinations i. Continuous assessment (record the method)		
15	What is the criteria for promoting a child from one grade to the next (explore reliance on formal tests/scores or other informal means)		



16	Do you provide any academic/back-up support to BSS teachers?		
17	If yes, give details		
18	If no, explore if they feel teachers need such support.		
19	What kind of TLM do BSS use? Explore adequacy/quality/content of the TLM supplied to BSS.		
20	Do the BSS have a library – explore usage and popularity?		
21	Is the quality of education in BSS comparable to that of formal schools? If yes, why/explain If no, why/explain		
22	Is the quality comparable to formal school?		
23	Is quality of education better than formal schools?		

### **Discussion with parents of BSS children in a nearby village:**

Open-ended discussion – list of issues to be explored will be finalised in the training workshop. Essentially we need to explore how the parent came to know about the BSS and why they sent their daughter/s. Have they noticed any appreciable change/difference in their children? If so what change (do not prompt)? Why did they not send their daughter to formal school and why and how did they decide to opt for BSS?

### **Group interaction with former students of BSS**

- 1) A half-day group activity with graduates of BSS in two districts (Ajmer and Bikaner):
  - a) Ask each of the 15 girls to narrate their story – how they enrolled in BSS and what has happened since they completed their programme.
  - b) Dreams and aspiration – including dream school
  - c) Learning outcomes – what do we know and how much do we know:
    - Simple reading / number exercises.
    - Reading a story – put up on charts.
    - Copying a song from the chart.
    - Singing together.
  - d) Describe your experience in BSS – through a role-play/song/poetry/a speech – whatever mode the girls would like to use.
  - e) Why did you send you daughter to BSS?
  - f) Did you like the BSS; does it meet your expectations?
  - g) Parents:
    - What are your aspirations for your children/expectations from schooling in general, the school in particular.
    - Do you see any perceptible difference in your child before and after? If so what



### Annexure 3: Profiles of Ten BSS

#### Pilu Kheda, Chittorgarh:

##### **Date of commencement February 28, 2003**

On an early Sunday morning we arrived in Pilu Kheda. Girls in freshly washed blue and white check salwar *kameez* uniform greeted us with a loud and enthusiastic *namaste*. We were informed that they had been waiting for our visit for the past three days. Being a festival day, two teachers were visiting a nearby temple, while another two were present in the office. The *shivir* is located in village Pilu Kheda, cluster Pan Bhorl which is 17 to 20 kilometres from Pratapgarh. The population of the village was around 500, spread over 100 households. There is a stretch of half a kilometre of *kutchra* road from the main centre of the village to the *shivir*. Local buses plying every hour connected the *shivir* to Pratapgarh.

The Lok Jumbish cluster office is 12 kilometres from the campsite. Soybean and maize are the main crops, but it is the production of opium that has led to prosperity in the areas. The *shivir* catered to girls living in the village mainly from the *banjara* and a few from the *bawari* community. Education of *banjara* girls had never been a tradition or a matter of concern for them. Child marriage and gender discrimination is a common practice.

On the day of the visit, the *shivir* had nearly completed almost six months. We were told that in spite of a middle school in the village, the girls had never been to school as there was no female teacher and ‘sir, used to beat children.’ A Lok Jumbish Sahaj Shiksha *Kendra* has been running for the past four years which was five minutes walking distance from the *shivir*. Some girls who used to attend the *Kendra* have now joined the *shivir*. A large number of girls still represent first generation learners in the area.

The *shivir* is housed in a newly constructed rented place owned by the *sarpanch* with white marble floors and red and white cement veranda. Initially the whole building was hired by Lok Jumbish but after a few days the *sarpanch* decided to take over one of the rooms<sup>6</sup>, which is now being used by the family members. With members living in the premises of the campus it has become a hubbub of village politics. The teachers complained that there was constant interference on camp activities by the family members (asking children not to make too much noise or if the children crossed over to *their space they would be yelled at*). The camp had a three-room structure (with two classrooms and one office space), with an enclosed veranda and a paved open courtyard. During summer the children along with the teachers often slept on the roof. The building was electrified though the fans in one classroom were not functional. The reason as one teacher pointed out ‘*those girls were in the habit of playing with regulators.*’

There was one small bathroom cum bathing space, only used by the teachers. With no provision for toilets the girls and teachers went out in the open fields. For bathing children went to their homes. We were informed that more than fifty percent of the girls went home at night. The camp was badly organised and it appeared that no regular cleaning of the rooms took place. Dusty and huge cob webs were seen in all corners. Torn mattresses, copies and textbooks were dumped in corners and shelves in both the classrooms. We were, however, informed that the girls did have the responsibility of cleaning their classrooms. The source of

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<sup>6</sup> The reason for taking back one room and the kitchen was that the *sarpanch*’s brother had lost the tender for the preparation of food for the girls in the camp. A makeshift room was rented but it could not work as a kitchen. The person who had been given the contract for the food had to cook the meals in his house, which was around a 2 - 5 minute walk from the *shivir*. Supervision of the food could be, done by the teachers. The children pointed out that the food was often cold and was not served on time.



drinking water was from a nearby bore-well. Two earthenware pots for drinking water were kept on the veranda.

Classes were held in the rooms and veranda. The latter was a place where girls had their meals. During our visit we often saw villagers using the courtyard as a pathway to walk over to the other side of the village. The courtyard and sometimes the rooftop was used for playing games and conducting other camp activities (morning prayers, exercises and *chetna satra*). As the camp was located in the village there were constant visits by parents on all days of the week. Children too, were constantly seen going in and out of the camp. We could never keep a count of the number of children actually present in the camp at any period of time.

On all days of our visit, except for the prayer session, none of the activities had been conducted. Also, for the past two months playtime was converted for washing clothes and visiting homes. The *chetna satra* had been changed to 'self-study' session. We were told that this was done, so that the girls would get enough time to prepare for the examinations. However, during our visit only some girls seemed to be involved in 'self-study' session.

Their parents had provided the children's uniforms. In the evening the girls were seen wearing their traditional dress (*ghagra* and *choli*). The teacher told us that since most of the girls possessed only one dress they would wash their dress everyday in the evening. Girls were provided toiletries such as one bathing soap once a week, washing soap once every fortnight, *kala dath manjan* (used for brushing teeth) and mustard oil for their hair.

The office space was also used as a teacher's room. Small trunks (containing official records, play materials, personal items), *dholak* and dancing bells were kept in one corner. A large number of thermocole sheets and chart papers meant to have been used in the preparation of TLM were lying unused as they did not arrive on time. Some worn out TLM and charts of alphabets, birds, animals, flowers and fruits place of interest, application for leave, days of the week and month were seen hanging in the classrooms. Two black boards of poor and rough quality were kept in each of the classrooms and in the veranda. Play materials consisted of two rubber rings and three skipping ropes. A one-day outing to Udaipur had been planned for the children for the coming week. Children had participated in the August 15, celebrations. We were informed with great pride that a child from the *shivir* had won a prize in a recitation competition - 'Lok Jumbish – from darkness to light.' Children also took part in devotional songs at the local temple.

The *shivir* staff consisted of four teachers, one manager, helper and a cook. Manager, a youth from the village was responsible for running errands and overall management of the *shivir* while the helper, an old woman, looked after cleanliness, fetching water and taking children who were ill to the local doctor or hospital in Pratapgarh. With the exception of the head teacher whose honorarium was Rs. 3500 the rest were paid a consolidated amount of Rs. 3000. Teachers were allowed three days of casual leave in a month. Extra days of leave meant a deduction of Rs 100 per day from their honorarium. Teachers complained that since they lived far away from Pratapgarh, three days seemed insufficient. Local teachers were not easily available.

No teachers had been appointed for the first month. Lok Jumbish cluster co-ordinator with the help of another SSK teacher took over the classes. By March four teachers had been appointed. However, one teacher left after a few hours of her arrival. She requested to be shifted to another camp as there was no provision for toilets. By July another teacher was transferred to a different camp. In the same month two more teachers were appointed. These teachers had left the camp in Parsola mid-way to join the present camp at the request of the



Project Officer<sup>7</sup>. We were told that shortage of teachers has remained a major problem in Pratapgarh. The camp would shift from two teachers to three to four and then three. There was an interim period of 20 days when a teacher supervised 40-45 girls on her own. This constant turnover of classes has disturbed the teaching learning process in the classes. Girls often took time to adjust to new teachers. All the teachers were from outside - Ajmer, Jaipur and Bhilwara. The teachers maintained the following registers:

- Enrolment
- Attendance
- Core group meeting of teachers held every night
- Visitors book
- Medical register – indicating the names of medicines given to the children
- Health register
- Parents contact register.

It was apparent on the second day that two distinct groups existed among the teachers. The minutes of the core group register indicated this tension<sup>8</sup>. This was also observed during our discussions with children. Meals were taken separately and communication limited between the teachers thus hampering day to day routine activities of the camp. Very few officials from the cluster or block office came over to supervise and monitor. We were informed that the teachers did not eat their meals with the children, as they felt shy eating in front of them.

The original names of the children had been changed<sup>9</sup>. At the time of our visit the children were divided into three groups Kaveri, Krishna A and B. The former two groups included girls (intelligent) preparing for examinations of V and IV class examinations. We were informed that Krishan B included students who were irregular and would only take class III examinations. Krishna A and B were being supervised by two teachers who had recently joined the *shivar*. Children with disability rarely enrolled themselves in the camp. We were informed that a parent had brought his physically challenged daughter girl (polio) but she left the camp after four days.

**Teacher Pupil Ratio**

Name of Group	Class/level	No. of Children
Krishna	V	15
Kaveri	V	12
Kaveri B	III	13

The teachers were responsible for teaching all the subjects in their respective groups. The head teacher<sup>10</sup> had the overall responsibility of the *shivar*, which meant attending meetings, maintaining records, completion of paper work and taking classes in the absence of a fellow teacher.

<sup>7</sup> During the course of our discussions it was mentioned that camps faced a large turnover in teachers. They would leave the camp mid way to join another camp. Often incentives in the form of additional facilities were promised to the teachers. We were, however, unable to confirm this information from other sources.

<sup>8</sup> The group complained to us that the head teacher often showed power and authority over them. They suggested that headship should be by rotation and not by seniority. All the teachers should be given a chance to be in that position.

<sup>9</sup> Names of children like - papu, pape, bhuri, dhapu, nainki, paparu were changed to Sangeeta, Anita, Komal – names which could be pronounced easily.

<sup>10</sup> There was an intense debate among the teachers whether the head teacher should also be given the responsibility of teaching a group as no official instructions was handed over to the teachers.





## Parsola, Udaipur

**Date of commencement February 21, 2003**

We arrived in the camp around 10 am accompanied by Project Officer of Dhariyawad. He had informed us earlier that the *shivir* was located in Mungwana. But leaking roofs and cracked floors forced the authorities to shift the venue of the camp to Parsola. Incidentally two camps were being held in the same area, a distance of 10-15 minutes drive between the two camps. The camp was located on the main road. Across the street was the cluster office of Lok Jumbish. The market was just a 10 minute walk from the *shivir*. The two and a half storey building looked very attractive and modern from outside. A close look inside did justify our impression. The landlord currently residing in Dubai had spent a lot of money and used expensive building materials in the construction of the building. In fact most of the houses in the surrounding areas had a similar look having been built with 'gulf money.' The doors and windows had a teak finish, with marble flooring, all the bathrooms were tiled and sinks made of granite and kota stone.

Iron channel gate indicated the entrance of the *shivir*. But we did not see the presence of watchman (*chowkidar*). We were informed that strangers could walk into the *shivir* without being questioned. On the left of the entrance was a flight of stairs leading to the roof. After walking a few yards there were steps that led to a huge lobby. A class was in progress. A woman was seen sweeping the floor. The head teacher teaching children of class III level in the lobby came to greet us. Children were either in blue and white *salwar* kameez or dark navy blue skirt and light blue shirt uniforms. While walking round the *shivir* we did see some children in printed frocks or *ghagra* and blouse. We were told that the parents of these children were unable to provide them with uniforms.

The ground floor had a huge drawing room where a green unused squash table was kept. Besides the lobby there was a room with an attached bathroom, which is used as a classroom cum teacher's room, a small kitchen used only to make *rotis* and *puri* and a storeroom where the children's personal items had been kept. The main kitchen was a half tin covered open space located at the end of the driveway right underneath a classroom. Smoke from the kitchen would filter into the classrooms.

The stairs leading to the first floor was dirty with cigarette butts and *paan* stains on the wall. We were informed that tenants living in the second floor were responsible for this. All day loud music could be heard being played from their floor too.

The first floor had a wall partition. On each side of the walled partition were two rooms with attached bathrooms and a store. One of the rooms on the left side was the office. The store rooms were used to keep mattresses, medical kit and personal items of the children, play items like ring, skipping rope, football, badminton, carom board, books, copies, slates and TLM. The shelves in each of the rooms were being used by the teachers to keep their personal belongings. The office room was neatly organised with charts, wall clock and scenic paintings (some of them had a tilt towards gender bias). The charts indicated the names of teachers, age, experience, maps of India, daily routines. A cracked globe and registers maintaining camp records were kept in the open space meant for an *almirah* (*cupboard*).

The teachers slept either with the children of their group or in the room downstairs (each teacher had been assigned one room). Since only 3 bathrooms were functional<sup>11</sup> the girls went to the fields to relieve themselves. A water tank had been constructed by Lok Jumbish

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<sup>11</sup> The latrines were blocked even before the building was taken on rent. The children not used to closed toilets and not knowing how to use them would often soil the floors. The teachers tried to provide 'toilet training' but the girls prefer to use the open fields. A water tank had been constructed behind the building.





Parishad behind the building. The attached bathrooms were used only for bathing. Some teachers were particular about allowing the children to use their bathrooms. Children informed us that they bathed once in two to three days. Basic toiletries like soap, *manjan* and oil were not always made available to the children.

The bathrooms were cleaned daily by a woman who would come between 9 and 10 am. There was no shortage of water as the building had its own boring. Children would wash their clothes either in the bathroom or near the constructed tank. A clothesline was hung from one wall to another. The camp had electricity but power failures were a common feature.

There was no specific time for playing. Teachers pointed out that children played whenever they got time 'in-between their studies or rest time or when they went out for latrine.' Play area was the hall (lobby), roof or the fields behind the building. A close scrutiny of the play items revealed that except for rope and rings all the items had hardly been used. Groups of children were responsible for the cleaning of the rooms the stairs and conducting the prayers. The mess staff served meals. Teachers ate after the children had eaten. We were informed that teachers slept with the children but it was only in the beginning months of the shivir.

One day during our observation of the prayer session we found that only 44 children were present. On inquiring we were informed by a teacher that: '*children have gone to the field for toilet . . . we have to start our work on time, we do not wait for them to come back . . . they are out in the fields, how can we, call them, they are far away.*' The prayer session was conducted in a routine and monotonous manner. *Chetna satra* had been converted into self-study session.

Like Pilu Kheda this camp too had a high turnover of teachers. At the time of our visit 5 teachers were present in the *shivir*.<sup>12</sup> One teacher had her child living with her in the camp. Till date 9 teachers had been appointed. Most of the teachers were from outside Dhariyawad. Appointment of local teachers does not seem to have been the norm. They all complained that they found it difficult to follow the local language.

Other staff known as the 'mess staff' included one manager, helper, head cook and two assistants. We were informed that one person from the kitchen would take up the duties of a *chowkidar* at night. For five months Sunday was a half-day. But with approaching examinations it is now a working day. Teachers are allowed to take three days off once in two months. This sometimes 'unofficially' could stretch to four days. If teachers went on leave there is a drop in attendance with children saying '*if our teachers go away we will also go away too.*'

The camp covered 5 to 6 villages, girls living at a distance of 2 to 15 kilometers belonging to Meena, Meghwal, and Bhil families. A number of children who had lost either one or both parents were part of the camp. At the beginning of the camp the number of children enrolled was, around 183. But some girls were sent back as they were below 9 years. Thus, in the first month the enrolment was around 125. But there has been a dropout almost every month bringing the number to 80 at the time of our visit. But a head count indicated the presence of only 58 girls. Girls living in the neighbouring villages covering a distance of 5 minutes would go home at night leaving the number varying from 55 to 60: 'they would leave after dinner and would be back before breakfast.' The teachers inadvertently revealed their practice of retaining in the attendance register the names of children who have dropped out. In fact no one from the Parishad had suggested that their names be struck off. There were few children in the camp who had some experience of schooling at class II and III levels. With the cluster

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<sup>12</sup> One teacher who also happened to be the head teacher had just left the camp to attend a 8 days orientation workshop (refresher course) organised by Lok Jumbish. The officials had no prior information on whether she was going re-join the present camp.



office being located across the street all decisions were taken in consultation with the cluster office. The Parishad staff would be seen constantly in and out of the *shivir*.

#### **Pattern of teacher appointment in Parsola**

February 21, 2003 -three teachers joined the shivir  
 February 22, 2003- one more teacher was appointed: 4  
 March 19, 2003 - one more teacher was appointed: 5  
 March 20, 2003 - one more teacher was appointed: 6  
 April 1 – May 7, 2003 - six teachers were present  
 May 8, 2003 - one more was appointed: 7  
 July 5, 2003 - one teacher left the shivir: 6  
 July 9, 2003 - one more teacher left the shivir: 5  
 August 5, 2003 - one more teacher was appointed: 6  
 August 16, 2003 - one teacher left the shivir: 5  
 August 21, 2004 - one more teacher left the shivir: 4  
 August 24, 2004 - one more teacher was appointed: 5

**Change in the number of teachers affected the teaching learning process in the camp. At the time of our visit five teachers were present in the camp.**

Excerpts from field notes, 2003

#### **Teacher Pupil Ratio**

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Class/level</b>	<b>No. of Children</b>
Fiza	V	13
Hawa	V	20
Mahak	V	18
Kushboo	IV	10
Lehar	III	10
Tarang	I and II	9

The girls were divided into six groups – Fiza, Hawa, Mahak, Kushboo, Lehar and Tarang and each of these groups were assigned one room. Grouping of children was on the basis of ‘weak’ and ‘intelligent’ students. The senior teachers were supervising the intelligent groups. The names of the groups were written on the door. Children either sat in rows or leaned against the wall, forming a semi-circle. Classes of five groups were held in the rooms and one in the lobby. The *shivir* had a total of seven mobile blackboards. Five were kept in the classrooms, one was used as an information board indicating attendance and enrolment and a small one for writing thoughts of the day.

A variety and range of teaching learning materials were hung on the walls of the classrooms. The teachers made some of them while the rest were bought from the market. Slogans of national leaders and well known saying and proverbs were neatly written on small chart papers and hung or pasted all over the *shivir*. There was a total absence of any handicrafts or drawings made by children.

Children had been taken out for short trips and excursions to Udaipur, *mela*, *mataji ka mandir* and nearby mines. The officials mentioned that they were treated to ice cream: ‘it was a pleasure to see them enjoying the outing and eating ice-cream.’ On August 15, girls gave a dance performance at the indoor stadium. A sports competition had been organised between the on-going camps (a first time event) where children from the *shivir* enthusiastically participated in high and long jump, skipping, general knowledge, *jalebi* race, *kabaddi*, *rangoli* and *sulekh* competitions.

Vas, Udaipur

**Date of commencement March 12, 2003**



A huge Jain dharamshala was the venue of the Vas shivir. Located in the village, it took us nearly three hours to cover the distance of 125 kilometres from Kotra. From Udaipur it is only 70 kilometres. When we entered the camp only two teachers were present out of six teachers. Two were on leave and another two had gone to Udaipur for a medical check-up. During our four-day stay we saw teachers arriving on different days except for one. Another, teacher left during our stay as her daughter who was living with her in the *shivir* had fallen ill.

For Lok Jumbish, Vas was a new block. This block had been included around nine months ago. The *shivir* was a first of its kind in this area. The office was a three to four minute walk from the *shivir*. Although part of Kotra the area had a mixed population comprising of Jain, Poorviya, Meghwal, Rajput, Garasia, Bhil, Meena, Gameti and Kathori. However, only children of Garasia, Gameti and Bhils were enrolled in the shiivr. We were informed by the *sarpanch* that upper caste people refused to send their children as '*adivasi ke bacche parte hain* (children of adivasis study here).' The camp covered 10-12 villages spread over a radius of around 120 kilometres. Our team cited instances of how children came to the camps: fifteen girls from Kotra as they did not get admission in the *shivir* being held there. Also, around forty girls were from one village Lambisema. In a gram sabha the panch members put pressure on the parents almost to the point of threatening them that if they do not send their children then '*hookha pani bandh kar dehge, akal rahat mein kam dena bandh kar denge* (we will see that all sources of earning and support will cease).' In village Kelthra the *sarpanch* took the initiative in bringing the girls to the *shivir*.

The *shivir* campus consisted of a large hall, four rooms, a small office and a bathroom on the ground floor. The rooms were used by the girls to keep their personal belongings. Sick children often slept in these rooms. A staircase adjacent to the office lead to the first floor that had a U shaped balcony on the inner side overlooking the hall downstairs. Classes were held in the hall and in the balcony upstairs. The children sleep upstairs and teachers take turns to sleep with them. The grill gate was kept half-open 'to prevent the girls from wandering around or running away.' The kitchen on the left side of the building was a semi-covered open space and had a separate entrance. While sitting in the inside balcony during a class observation we could smell a foul stench. On close inquiry we found a *godown* (*store*) near the bottom of the staircase filled with rotten onions and potato peels. Also smoke emanating from the kitchen led to coughing fits among the children.

A cleaning woman came to the *shivir* four times a week. Groups of children take turns to clean the rooms. Water is available from a boring well but due to dim voltage, fluctuations and severe power cuts, the water problem is acute. Water tanker is often called for supply of water. Each round costs around Rs 300. Lok Jumbish had to pay Rs 3000 to get an electricity connection. We were told that *shivir* did not have electricity for over a week just before our arrival. The problems persist specially during the rainy season or bad weather. The timetable has to be changed as girls are given an extra hour in the morning for self-study. All the fans and tube lights were in working condition. The girls woke up around 5.30 am and it was not until 10 p.m. that they could go to sleep. The routine varied depending on the availability of power. Four petromax lamps did not seem sufficient for the girls to study at night. There were six blackboards in a reasonable good condition, one for each classroom. The last one used as an information board and to write the thought of the day.

Lok Jumbish had spent Rs. 10, 000 to construct cemented tanks for storing water, two latrines and a bathroom.<sup>13</sup> Of the two toilets only one was used at night. The other was blocked as someone had thrown stones in the pot. However, with no regular water supply the girls preferred to go to the river that was about 5 minutes walk from the *shivir*. Other people from the village also used this place. During a short visit to the stream we found that areas surrounding it did not look very clean. A bridge next to the stream was used for morning

<sup>13</sup> The latrines were used only at night and only by some of the older girls.



exercises. The teachers informed us that ‘children like going out so we have no choice.’ They are taken there twice, once in the morning and later again around 6 p.m. after the classes are over. A small covered space next to the office was used by the teachers for bathing. For toilet facilities they too went outside.

The children bathed on every alternate day. The blue *salwar kameez* uniform was provided by the parents. Toiletries like *manjan*, oil and soap were not given regularly to the girls. This information was corroborated from other sources too. Teachers mentioned that when girls first came to the camp they would wear large *bindis*, anklets and earrings (quite a few in number) and nose studs. The *didis* in the *shivir* gradually cajoled them into wearing less jewellery. Soon the girls began imitating their teacher, an ideal role model.’ This was true for almost all the camps.

The camp has a medical kit consisting of medicines for stomach ache, fever and earache. The teachers administer the doses. While we were present a girl complained of an earache. But she did not wish to go for a check-up to the hospital. The teacher put in some eardrops. Only children with persistent fever or aches are taken to the hospital. The teachers availed the services of a local PCO for receiving messages.

The walls were displayed with beautiful charts all prepared by teachers. Interesting slogans were painted on the walls too.

Dropout and children running away has been a major problem of this *shivir*. We were told that a *neem* tree overlooking the fields had to be cut because the children would jump from the tree. Visits to the river also gave the girls an opportunity to run away. A strict vigilance had to be kept. Children would walk more than 25 kilometres to reach their homes. The camp began with an enrolment of 124 children. Attendance registers showed 73 who were somewhat regular but a head count indicated the presence of only 62 children. We were told that some were ill at home while others were yet to return back from after a local festival and *mela* (fair). For two days two teachers divided their time between 62 children. Attendance is taken twice, once during morning prayers and the other just before beginning of *chetna satra* to ensure that children are present in the camp. Interesting reasons for dropout mentioned was that when the *shivir* commenced in Tripal girls were taken away from this *shivir*. Objections were raised by parents, leading to a dropout of girls.

During our interaction we were informed that in the beginning girls belonging to Garasia and Gameti would not eat together as the former consider themselves superior in the social hierarchy. To break down the barriers the teachers sat and ate with them. In the *chetna satra* too such issues were taken up for discussion. Over the months teachers saw friendship developing between girls of both communities.

Play equipment were ring, badminton, and football, skipping rope and carom board. The hall and roof was used as play area or when children were taken to the river. Local games like *ghodra*, *chuppan chupai*, *kho-kho*, *kabaddi*, *rumal jhapti*, *langri tang* and *kabaddi* too seemed very popular.

The camp staff consisted of:

- six teachers (one with physical disability – polio)
- one manager (the post was lying vacant for over two months)
- one helper
- one head cook with assistants

When the camp commenced on March 12 most teachers had not been appointed. Three Muktaqs from the Mukangan taught for the first month. Most of the teachers joined on the



last week of the first month. Actual teaching began only after the teachers had joined the camp. In the beginning the group/class teacher was responsible for the group. Every teacher is allowed three days leave per month and Rs 100 is deducted for the extra days for any extra leave. The Project Officer makes a visit once in 15 days and other Lok Jumbish officials are in constant touch.

**Teacher Pupil Ratio**

Name of Group	Class/level	No. of Children
Barkha	V	19
Bahar	V	21
Rimjhim	IV	12
Varsha	IV	11
Barsat	III	10

After April there was a shift from the system of the class teacher teaching all the subjects to subject wise teaching as the children demanded the change. Barkha and Bahar were the intelligent students of the camp. Rimjhim were the ones 'slightly behind' but would take the class V examination. The children in level four were those termed as 'slow learners.' The Barsat group were 'irregular, weak and those who had run away from the camp a number of times.'

Vas *shivir* was the only one where a Parent Teacher Association had been formed. Records indicated that five meetings had been held so far. The agenda related to: change in the venue of the *shivir*, illness, dress, meeting time with children, education, excursions, information on the dates of new camps and linkages with the formal system. Special diet is also given to the children on the day of the PTA meeting.

On the last day of our stay the children gave a short performance. Dressed in traditional attire the children sang to the tune of a modern Hindi pop song. The actions were what one sees in the Hindi music video albums. The teachers went to a great deal of effort in organising the program for us. With great pride they also informed us that this programme was also presented on August 15 where the girls of the *shivir* had won the first prize. The immediate question that came to our mind ...what kind of culture are we exposing the girls too . . . Is this what we want are girls to learn from these camps?

## Atru, Baran

### **Date of commencement September 8, 2003**

Sound of '*akhand path*' greeted us on our first day visit to the *shivir*. On our arrival we were informed that '*kanya puja*' (worship of the girl child) was in progress and the girls would be served '*kheer puri*' for lunch.

Although Atru is only 25 kilometres from the district headquarter Baran, the roads are in extremely bad condition and it takes over an hour to reach the *shivir*. The site of the camp is an old distillery building renovated during the first *shivir*. Parts of the building, which was in a dilapidated condition, had been taken over from the administration by Lok Jumbish on 9 December 2002. In the adjacent area there are other parts of buildings in an equally run down condition. During the second *shivir* efforts at renovation continued.

The building is located on the outskirts of the town and has a boundary wall. Just outside the *shivir* there is a temple. There is a common gate for people to come and go to the temple and the *shivir*. However, there was another iron gate to allow vehicles into the premises. The main *shivir* building consisted of four rooms for the girls, two rooms for the teachers, and one storeroom to keep mattresses and children's belongings and an office room. Behind this building were the toilets and the space for bathing. The kitchen was an open space at the left of the entrance. The space surrounding the kitchen areas is used for serving meals. Once a month the children were given a special diet. There was a cemented tank used by the children to wash utensils.





The budget for rent from the previous *shivir* was utilised for constructing a boundary wall, three toilets, two bathrooms, *chabutara* at the entrance where functions were held, an elevated platform used for bathing covered with blue plastic sheets (the bathrooms were used by the teachers and the toilets used by the girls at night). The children preferred to use the open fields for toilet needs. The rent from this *shivir* would be used in the construction of a kitchen and permanent drinking water facilities. Saplings of trees and seasonal flowers had been planted in the open space in front of the building. There were also eucalyptus trees, bougainvillea and gulmohur trees. It was here that all *shivir* activities took place like morning prayers, yoga and exercises, *chetna satra* and classes. Neatly lined *chappals* were kept at the entrance to the building and a blackboard with sayings of the day and other important information. A bell was seen hanging on a tree.

The first *shivir* faced an acute shortage of water. However, in this *shivir* the problem was somewhat solved by a piped connection to a bore well from a lawyers house located just behind the building. The camp had to pay for the electricity bills. Sometimes a water tanker was also called in to meet the shortage crises. Water was stored in sintex tanks near the entrance and the toilets. The building was electrified with bulbs and fans in working condition. Tinned garbage bins were kept in every nook and corner.

The rooms were airy and well lit. The walls were painted in three colours. Three feet from the bottom was painted blue. Around four feet was in saffron and the rest in white. On the saffron portion there were plans to make the children draw on them.

**Teacher Pupil Ratio**

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Class/level</b>	<b>No. of Children</b>
1	I	15
2	I	15
3	I	15
4	I	15
5	I	15
6	I	15

The girls were in blue check *salwar kameez* donated by the Lions Club. The Headmistress of the Senior Secondary School donated about 50 uniforms. We were informed that efforts were being made to provide the children with shoes and socks in the near future. The *shivir* staff consisted of seven teachers, manager, helper, and head cook with two helpers. Children were provided with ropes and rings. But they played their local games which included indoor and out door sports like *kho-kho* and *kabaddi*.

Initial enrolment in this camp was 160. Within ten to fifteen days it came down to 115. The girls belonged predominantly to either Scheduled Tribe (Meena) or Scheduled Caste (Yadav, Jatav, Koli, Meghwal and Dhobi). Only three girls were Muslims. We did see the presence of two children with physical disability. Attendance had dropped because of festival days. However, the teachers were confident that the rest of the girls would soon be back. Around 92 girls were present during the days of our visit. Although Sunday had been fixed for meeting parents, they came almost every day.

The classrooms had very good TLMs on the walls. All the classrooms had inbuilt blackboards. In addition there were six mobile blackboards. At the time of our visit two classes were held outside, underneath the trees.

**Shahbad, Baran**

**Date of commencement September 17, 2003**



We reached the camp around 8 pm when *chetna satra* was in progress. All the girls were engrossed in a signing session. Soon afterwards a Lok Jumbish Karmik began a story telling session using puppets. We all sat down with the girls, absorbing the atmosphere of the camp. The programme continued till quite late in the night. We were informed that this is the pattern for the first month as girls take time to settle down. Sometimes little incidents quarrelling and stealing are discussed through the puppet show.

Shahbad is 82 kilometres from Baran, the journey taking almost three hours by jeep. Good metalled roads made the journey very comfortable. The building located almost one and a half kilometres from the main market was constructed in 1953. It originally belonged to two co-operative societies Patari and Sanwara Van Upaj Utpadan Sahakari Samiti. Lok Jumbish took over the building in 1993. The rent from the *shivirs* was used to repair the boundary wall, construct toilets, bathing space, *chabutara* and a temporary roof over the kitchen. *Electricity, water and maintenance charges are paid from the shivir expenses.* Three *shivirs* have been held so far in this building. The whole campus is spread out over one to two *bighas* of land. The front pathway was laid with red sandstone. We could get a sense of an open space in the camp. Teachers mentioned they were amidst a hill station that reminded them of Mount Abu with mountains and lush green fields. The trees were in full bloom during our visit. However, just last year the whole area was in the grip of a severe drought. The campus was peaceful and an air of serenity could be felt all round. An iron gate and a boundary wall separated the campus from the main road. The boundary wall was used by the children for drying clothes.

### Box 3 A day in the camp

The bell rings at 5.30 am. We could hear the noise of girls getting up from the hall. From my room I could see girls walking outside the gate carrying blue plastic lotas (mugs).

When girls come back its time for *shramdan* (*free labour*). Groups of girls clean the campus, some the halls yet some take their time . . . at 6.30 am the bell rings again. Girls form a big circle. Its time for yoga and exercises. A teacher is within the circle. She makes the girls run in a circle just to warm up. The Project Officer joins in. He tells the girls that yoga is good . . . it disciplines one's body and mind. The session ends with a prayer. Children are asked to do Lok Jumbish clapping followed by rocket clapping. A girl is asked to sing a song '*ek chuha bechari, wah, (Oh – the poor old mouse)! wah ! wah!*' Rest of the girl follow join the chorus.

It's 7 am. Two girls distribute *gai chap kala dath manjan*. Girls go up to their rooms to pick up their clothes. Children are taken to the river for bathing. A teacher accompanies them. The water is cold. At the river children brush their teeth, bathe with Nirma beauty soap and wash their clothes. Wet clothes are hung on the boundary wall and trees. The teacher said that 'when it becomes colder girls would use the bathrooms. We have showed them how to bathe. In their own village girls would open their clothes . . . no feeling of shyness . . . now we have taught them.'

By 8 a.m. its time for breakfast. They have brought their steel plates and glass along with them. Girls sit on durries. The mess staff serves the food. Girls say a short prayer before starting their meal. Today they are given *aloo paratha* (unleavened flat bread filled with potato) and tea.

9 am – after breakfast time for the morning prayers. The girls sit in a square arrangement on blue durries. A student lit an incense stick in front of the picture of goddess Saraswati. Students joined their hands in prayer that started to the rhythm of the *dhholak*. Ma *Saraswati vandana* is sung. This is followed by some more religious songs. The girls were all wearing their uniforms, hair neatly tied and well oiled. After prayers there was a song and a proverb for the day was taught with correct pronunciation. Two to three children were awarded red





and green badges for neatness in appearance. Teachers and children sang a couple of *bal geet* (songs for children). Girls go to their classes by 10 am.

12.00 p.m. - the bell rings for lunch. A woman from the kitchen lays down the blue *durrie*. Girls run out to get their plates and glasses. They keep seats for their friends. Lunch is – *dal*, *roti* and rice. Two girls serve *dal*. Mess staff serve the rice and *roti* (unleavened flat bread).

Around 1.00 p.m. the girls separated into small groups. Groups of girls in twos and threes are skipping rope, some were picking lice from each other's hair or tying plaits and were singing and dancing. Some girls were inside the room arranging clothes . . .or sleeping/resting. In front of each blackboard we saw groups of girls copying what the teacher had written. Some were seen drawing on the blackboard, some playing with chalk. A girl's mother has arrived from the village and girls of that village surrounded her. Some girls were sweeping the floor . . . some drying their clothes.

By 2.30 p.m. they go back to their classes. From 6 -7 p.m. its rest and time to play games time. Dinner is from 7 p.m.

*Chetna satra* starts with a prayer from 8 p.m. and goes on till 9.30 p.m. Since the girls are still getting used to the *shivir* this session goes on till quite late in the evening. Songs, dances, role plays are performed by the children and teachers. Friendship between two rabbits is enacted through a puppet show. Children listen engrossed throughout the show. *Sanyukta* informs us that story telling and puppet shows are an effective medium to communicate messages to the children like stealing and fighting. The day ends. Children disperse. . . it's time to sleep. The teacher goes to the hall to switch off the lights.

Excerpts from investigators notes, 2003

The numbers of children enrolled were 165 covering 11 villages. However, on the date of our visit 101 girls were present. There was a predominance of Sehariya girls followed by Bhils. Scheduled Caste and OBC (Koli, Jatav, Harijan, Yadav, Koni, Rathore, and Khangar) girls formed a large number. A few girls also belonged to the Sikh community. The camp had a well organised computerised list of information of all the girls currently enrolled.

Just behind the halls were seven toilets. Of these only five were operational, primarily used by the teachers and children at night. Children preferred to use the open fields to freshen up. Each child was also given blue plastic mugs to be used as water containers. For bathing, children were taken to the river around 500 meters away from the campus. But for the winter months bathing was in a closed enclosure - a raised platform of 4x20 feet covered with plastic sheets where six taps had been constructed. Water was available from a bore well and piped lines. Large sintex tanks were used for storing water. Parts of a government girl's primary school were used as a kitchen and office for Lok Jumbish (with permission from the collector). A cemented wall separated the campus from the kitchen. The *shivir* was electrified but there were power cuts for over six hours almost every day. For maintaining cleanliness, groups of children by rotation were given weekly responsibility. In addition a woman would come once a week to sweep the premises. On the second day of our visit we saw them doing *shramdan* early in the morning. A group of ten children was responsible for 'putting the *durrie* during prayer session, lighting agarbatti, organising the seating arrangement, leading the *chetna satra* and putting the *chappals* in lines.' The Project Officer supervised a regular yoga session in the morning.

The girls were using two large halls. These halls were converted into classrooms during the day. The teachers had a separate room to themselves. Besides these there was a storeroom, an office room and an unused office room. The office unlike other *shivirs* had a table and a few chairs and a steel *almirah*. On the top of the *almirah* were displayed clay toys made by



children during the first week. On one side of the wall an elaborate breakfast menu and the timings of the meals was hung on the wall. There was no defined area for a playground but open spaces were used by the children to play their local games like *kho-kho*, *kaddi*, *tir kaman* and *gitti*. Some play equipment like skipping rope, rings, carom board, badminton racquet, volleyball and football had arrived but they were yet to be opened. Cycling was also taught to the girls, so the teachers said.

The children were given bathing soap once a month and washing soap once in five days. *Kala dath manjan* and mustard oil was given daily. There were three to four mirrors that were kept in each of the halls. Children kept their plates and glasses under lock and key. On inquiry we were told that since stealing had taken place a couple of times they were advised to do so.

Besides the teachers other *shivir* staff included were the manager, helper, one Head cook with two assistants. A Lok Jumbish Karmik and a helper were entrusted the responsibility of sleeping outside the halls for security reasons. The *shivir* had a long list of registers and files maintained by the head teacher:

- observation register
- visitors register
- medicine register
- health register
- attendance register of children and staff
- register indicating permanent and perishable items
- register providing detail information of the girls

List of files:<sup>14</sup>

- newspaper file
- file indicating children, staff and teachers on leave
- admission forms and consent
- of guardians
- test papers of children

The children were given a special diet once a month and fruits like bananas, apples and orange once a week. Sunday being a half-day was a day for meeting parents. On this day hair and nail cutting sessions took place. Teachers with the help of older children undertook sewing sessions. The children did not wear uniforms although some of them were seen in blue *salwar and kameez*. The Karmiks said girls came in 'torn clothes and one dress.' Sankul Prahbari had brought in some old clothes. With winter approaching the Project Officer was trying to get sweaters donated by a local businessman. The children were supplied with a bed sheet, blanket, quilt and mattress, glass plate, slates, books, rubber, copies, pens and pencils. Bags are yet to be provided.

Teachers have made TLM like flash cards, alphabet charts. Ready made TLMs were also available. Classes were held in the open underneath the trees and in the halls. There were two inbuilt and six movable blackboards. The children were divided into six groups with interesting names of famous women whose achievements were well known. The camp started with five teachers. As two teachers had left after four days two Lok Jumbish Karmiks were called to take over some classes till new teachers were appointed.

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<sup>14</sup> The Project Officer on his own initiative had printed a blue booklet – a baseline information (socio-economic profile) of the girls, record of weekly and monthly evaluation tests indicating academic levels of the girls and health details.



### Teacher Pupil Ratio

The head teacher who had previously worked in the *shivir* in Atru mentioned the problem of shortage of teachers. The current list had been exhausted and all efforts were being made to appoint more teachers. There was no procedure to appoint the teachers

Name of Group	Class/level	No. of Children
Indira Gandhi	I	18
Mother Teresa	I	18
Meera Bai	I	16
Lakshmi Bai	I	16
Kalpana Chawla	I	18
Panna Dhari	I	16

having worked in the previous camps. During our second day visit we saw two teachers taking leave to take the Rajasthan Administrative examinations. One of them informed us that she would not return since she had been selected as a third grade teacher. On the same day a teacher along with her little girl child arrived at the *shivir*.

We attended the core group meeting at night. The discussion, a daily routine affair, centred on topics taught by the teachers and some lesson planning. The head teacher read out a list of information dealing with the nitty gritty matters of the camp. The Project Officer and other staff of Lok Jumbish were also present.

## Sam, Jaisalmer

### Date of Commencement 25 March 2003

Sam block of Jaisalmer has the picture book look of a desert terrain with undulating sand dunes, lilting folk music and the local population essentially comprising of simple and hard working cattle grazing and subsistence farming communities who are mostly poor. The harsh ecology of the area with vast stretches of thinly populated villages, dhanis (or smaller neighbourhoods adjacent to villages) and bastis (or congested inhabitations) with little irrigable land makes this region one of the most backward ones of Rajasthan. The region has strong nomadic cultural influences and clan and community ties have a very tight hold on the lives of its people. A sparse life style and eco-social and cultural conservation is reflected in their housing, eating and personal hygiene habits, skills, livelihood practices, customs and mores. An essentially unexposed world of women and girls from this area of the Rajasthan desert sharply mirrors the conservative aspects of society with both its intrinsic strengths and negative features.

Population of Sam block is comprised of Muslims, Hindu Scheduled Castes (S.Cs) and Rajputs. It's an area with a 75-80 per cent Muslim majority and the remaining population consists of Hindu S.Cs and a very small minority of upper caste Hindu families. The impoverished existence for the majority in the area is in contrast to the presence of well-endowed establishment of military and armed forces serving in this area which is geographically contiguous with Pakistan. The army establishment and the upper caste families of Jains, Rajputs, Baniyas and a few influential Muslims from the local community have access to telecommunications networks and other resources. Most of these well-to-do locals have shifted their residence to Jaisalmer city for their children's education and for trade purposes.

### Educational profile of Sam block

With the exception of a few girls who had gone beyond class V in Sam block, the rest were never enrolled or had dropped out at the primary level. According to one influential member of the Muslim community, retention levels of the boys was also poor. Only 10-15 boys may have gone up to class X /XII from this area. Secondary board results from this cluster have been zero per cent in the last few years.



In the last 7-8 years many alternative educational programmes were started in this area such as Shiksha Karmi schools, Sahaj Shikshan Kendras (SSK), Shiksha Mitra Kendras (SMK) and Muktangans under LJP and recently, in the last two years, Rajiv Gandhi Pathsahlas (RGP). These programmes didn't succeed in addressing the educational needs of the girls, especially the older girls. Functioning of the Government Primary (GP) Schools evoked a uniformly critical opinion from parents and the girls for their poor quality, indifference and non-performance.

### **Sam BSS - Highlights**

This was the first BSS which was being organised in Sam cluster of Sam block (it has 4 clusters). The earlier camps were organised in the Khuri and Fatehgarh clusters where girls from the Sam cluster were sent. The BSS was located at a distance of 60 kilometres from Jaisalmer city. The BSS was housed in an unused Primary Health Centre (PHC) building adjoining which was the LJP cluster office. Proximity of the cluster office and its supportive staff had a positive influence on the functioning of BSS. The management and programme implementation of this BSS was being done by an NGO, SWATCH that was the mobilising agency for LJP in the Sam cluster.

The social profile of the 80 girls in this BSS was pre dominantly Muslim. 80 per cent of the girls in the BSS were Muslims and the remaining were from the S.C Hindu communities with an exception of 1 girl each from general and S.T communities. A majority of the girls in the shivir were from poor pastoral families.

Out of 193 who were initially enrolled 80 girls were studying in Sam BSS. This BSS had the maximum enrolment and a big dropout rate in comparison to the other 4 BSS visited by our team. Main reasons for the heavy drop-out rate were given as under age of the girls, being pulled out to work in famine relief programme, girls not able to adjust to the unfamiliar BSS routine and some of the girls from the Hindu community went back because of the pre-dominance of Muslim girls in the BSS. Due to over-enthusiasm by some cluster workers the number of girls selected had exceeded way beyond 100. Therefore, many younger girls had to be sent back.

Due to good social mobilisation by the cluster level staff, the local influential Muslim men folk were supportive of the BSS activities and participated in its enrolment drive and meetings with the parents of the BSS girls.

Experienced teachers and good teamwork among them was a positive feature of the BSS.

### **Visible changes due to the BSS**

According to the cluster level workers many of the girls who would earlier run inside their house on seeing an unfamiliar person or were even scared of a jeep in their *dhani* were now confident enough to go to Jaisalmer for their studies or to visit the market with their friends.

An ex sarpanch of the area said that earlier there were only 25-30 girls attending the local primary school of his village. The strength has now increased to 65 girls. For the first time girls from the periphery of 7-8 kms had taken admission in the upper primary school of Sam panchayat and all but one came after successfully achieving their class V level from the previous BSS.

Parents were now waiting for the next Shivir to enrol the older girls in the families.

Basic needs of the girls regarding food, health, hygiene, sanitation and water, shelter and security and educational supplies were being met in the shivir and it had a healthy learning environment.



## Sarat, Jalore

### **Date of Commencement 25 March 2003**

Jalore is known for granite production and its marketing. It is divided into 7 blocks of which Sanchores is the biggest block. The social and political elite of this area is from the Jain, Purohit and Rajput communities. Trading, employment in government service and large land holdings forms the economic and occupational profile of these communities. Numerically O.B.C and the S. C communities have a very significant presence in Jalore and their occupational profile is predominantly agricultural and the more educated ones are in the service sector.

Its proximity to Gujarat has influenced the blending of the language, culinary habits, dress and many of the religio-cultural practices of the two regions. Gujarat also has an impact on the nature of commercial activities, avenues of employment and in and out migration of labour of Jalore. Women and girls had better access and more exposure to media and technology and its influence was much more visible here in comparison to the almost untouched lives of women and girls in Sam, Jaisalmer.

### **Educational status of Jalore**

Although it's not amongst the poorer district of Rajasthan but it's still one of the educationally backward districts with a serious problem of low literacy rates for girls and women compounded by the poor school retention levels. In a recent educational initiative of the district administration supported by LJP all children in the in the 6-14 years were educationally tracked in a comprehensive survey and a plan was drawn to enrol all of them in various educational programmes in a time bound manner.

### **Sarat, BSS highlights**

Sarat is located at a distance of 40 k.m. from Jalore city. It's a very well connected village that has access to all the basic services. It has a major presence of members from the prosperous Jain community who have built big houses which have mostly been rented out or are lying vacant because the families are living in cities and visit the village house only for family occasions.

Out of 96, who were initially enrolled, 74 girls were studying in Sarat BSS. More than 50 per cent of the girls in the BSS were from the S.C communities and about 27 per cent of them were from general categories in which there was a significant number of Rajput girls, 15 per cent were S.T and the remaining few were from the O.B.C and Muslim communities. In comparison to the isolated and untouched lives of girls in Sam BSS, the girls here were vocal, less shy (they knew about some of the popular new Hindi films and songs) and had relatively better economic conditions back home. The comparatively better economic status of their family didn't however turn into educational opportunities for these girls. All of them were looking after the family cattle and doing the house hold chores. A few of them have had a shy at primary schooling but had dropped out half way through either because of gender compulsions or due to the inappropriate and unfriendly school conditions. Without exception the male siblings of these girls were attending the schools and some of them were pursuing education up to the college level.

The BSS was running from a rented accommodation which was spacious, *pucca* and had water and electricity supply with the provision of basic security of a barbed fence and fenced windows and doors. The building was located in the middle of the village.

During our visit, except for one teacher, the other five were not available because they had been sent to attend a refresher training course for 10 days. In the interim period the cluster level staff was deputed who were not trained for classroom teaching.



The group discussions with the mothers reflected that the good learning and living experiences of the past and present BSS had positively influenced the aspirations of mothers for their daughters. They were willing to support them for pursuing higher studies and also talked of delaying the age for sending them to the marital house.

Sarat BSS was a good example of showing motivation of girls and parental willingness as important factors driving the educational initiative.

## **Pugal, Bikaner**

### **Date of commencement 25 March 2003**

One of the first BSS in LJP was organised in Bikaner district way back in 1997-98 (some of the girls who had passed from the previous camps are now studying in class IX and X). It's also one of the first districts where LJP had started functioning in 1992. Because of the history of many educational initiatives taken up by LJP and the local NGOs (Urmul) in this district, the LJP office in Bikaner is programmatically strong in management, in having experienced and trained human resources, in social mobilisation and enjoyed a good relation ship and partnership with the present district administration and educational authorities. These strengths have enabled the Bikaner LJP office to take up a pro-active role in implementing specific educational programmes for the most deprived children and girls in the area. These included a mobile school van for the children of nomadic tribes and seasonal migrant families, plans to link up girls through the Kishori Manch (young girls forums) to the state and national level, encourage sporting activities such as wall climbing and Kho Kho and provide training through Agricultural Science Institute and Jan Shikhsan Sansthan in improved agricultural and cattle raising practices to the older girls and mothers. They also placed trained female teachers in Urdu medium government schools to improve the retention rates of Muslim girls in some of the remote villages and ran the Mukhtangan programme for remotely located habitations.

The LJP office in Bikaner seemed to be motivated and keen to plan and envision strategies to address the issues of quality and equity in education within their specific context.

### **Pugal BSS highlights**

Pugal serves as the sub block headquarter and it's one of the 36 LJP clusters that are spread over 5 blocks of Bikaner district. Pugal is located at approximately a distance of 80 -85 kms. from Bikaner city. It's a village that is well connected by road and has all the basic service infrastructure. Its development is mainly due to the activities and infrastructure created by the Command Area Development (CAD), a government body that was set up for the construction of the Indira Irrigation Canal in this region. Pugal was one of the sites where CAD constructed its guesthouse, living quarters for officers, school hostel for boys and a civil engineer's office that has been given to the LJP for running the BSS. Villages in this area have scattered habitations along stretches of sand dunes and the irrigation canal. Many girls who had come to the Pugal BSS and the previous ones were from the small *dhanis* settled around the irrigable land near the canal due to which the local G.P.S and upper G.P.S were not easily accessible for the girls living there. This was the first camp being organised in Pugal.

The building of the BSS was in excellent condition and met the requirements of security, teaching and learning, recreation and other basic amenities extremely well. Essential criteria for running a good residential school were being very satisfactorily met in Pugal BSS. At the entrance of the building where the BSS is located one was greeted by the sight of the books hanging from rope strings on the two sides of the entrance door. During their free time girls could be found sitting with the story books in that room.





The learning environment at the BSS was very positive. The teachers' team was well knit and there was regular exchange of information between the teachers and the BSS in charge and other concerned officials on academic progress being made by the girls on different subjects. Following up the need for academic support as expressed by the teachers, subject resource persons were deputed for some days to the BSS.

The facilitative and supportive role played by the cluster, block and district staff of LJP was evident in the functioning of the BSS. Due to very strong mobilisation by the cluster level workers among the parents and in the villages, there was a significant degree of contribution made in kind by the parents of the girls. The uniform worn by the girls in Pugal BSS for instance was provided by the parents and not by the LJP office. Besides this practice, Pugal BSS also differed from the other BSS in not providing for toiletries such as soap, oil, combs etc. to the girls. This kind of contribution from the parents was attributed by the programme staff to the strong social mobilisation at the village level which had generated a high degree of interest to send the older girls to the BSS and other alternative educational programmes run by LJP.

Out of 136 who were initially enrolled, 98 girls were studying in Pugal BSS. A majority of the girls were not from the socially and economically poorest households. Their families had enough from the land and cattle to feed the family and meet the other requirements for survival. Boys as was the case in other BSS were going to the school at the primary, upper primary level and a few at the college level. The caste status of the girls in the BSS was divided equally between the S.C and O.B.C communities at 45 per cent each and 8 per cent belonged to the Muslim community. There was only one girl each from the general caste and S.T community. These girls were from the agricultural households and all of them had to look after cattle.

Excellent infrastructure and facilities, trained teachers, attractive teaching learning environment, TLMs, high scholastic achievement levels, enthusiastic girls, supportive programme management and parental support all have added up to make this BSS a model one.

Our parting memories of Pugal BSS -

*"Har bache ka yeh adhikar; Sa ko sehat, shiksha, maan aur pyar"*

*"Bhai jab ghar mein kam kraye; Tabhi to behna padne jaye"* (It is every child's right to get an education, self respect and love. It is when the brothers help in the house that their sisters can go to school) – these and other slogans were chanted every morning.

## Kishangarh and Tabiji, Ajmer

### **Date of commencement 1 September 2003**

Ajmer is one of the most popular destinations on the tourist map of Rajasthan. The towns and most of the villages in this district are connected by road. Tourism and marble mining are the key employment providing service sectors along with the rural economy mainly surviving on agriculture and cattle raising. Rural parts of this district are no different from other areas in rural Rajasthan in terms of achievement on the educational and socio- cultural indicators of development for women, children, girls and the other marginalised sections of the rural population.

Ajmer is amongst the districts where LJP first began its educational programmes in 1992-93. LJP is working in all the seven blocks of Ajmer district. This district has been at the forefront of initiating many of the education initiatives taken in LJP such as SSK, SMK, teacher training and curriculum and textbook development.





11 B.S.S have been organised in Ajmer in the last two years. Out of 1058 girls who were enrolled in the previous BSS approximately 350-400 of them are studying in class VI/VII in the UGPS.

In the current session 7 BSS had begun from the first week of September. At each venue the organising experience of previous BSS had helped in making the organisational task easier for the present BSS. It was also stated that it was comparatively easier to get the girls for the BSS due to the success of previous BSS and parental readiness.

In these two BSS there were a large number of girls whose elder or younger sisters (also from the extended families) had passed out from the previous BSS. We found this trend to be a common one but to a lesser degree in the other three BSS that we had visited.

Our team visited two BSS, one in Kishangarh and the other one in Tabiji. Girls in these two BSS were from a slightly better economic status. It seemed that quite a few of them had some educational experience through alternative centres or had dropped out from the local GPS. This experience didn't translate much into learning achievement for them except for their familiarity with some of the Hindi alphabets and a basic numeracy awareness of counting up to 100.

Predominance of girls from the O.B.C communities was another defining characteristic of the two BSS of Ajmer from the rest that we had visited in the other districts. In Kishangarh more than 80 per cent and in Tabiji little less than 70 per cent were OBC and their economic status was relatively better. Their exposure to modern day media and telecommunication was marginally higher than that of the girls at the other BSS.

These two BSS were good experiences to illustrate what goes on in the initial phases of setting up the BSS routine, fixing roles and responsibilities and the teething troubles in management and organisation. At both the BSS for instance we noticed that a majority of the girls had cropped and short hair. On enquiring we were told that their hair had been chopped off by the teachers to reduce the lice problem. This we were told was the standard practice observed in the initial phase in many BSS.

### **Kishangarh BSS**

Kishangarh is a big town famous for its trade in Makrana marble. It comes under the Silora block. The BSS was running in the heart of the Kishangarh town in a newly developed colony by the marble traders. It was housed in rented accommodation, which was a community centre owned by one of the S.C communities of the town.

It was the only BSS of the five that our team visited which was to cater to 50 girls. This was also the smallest accommodation of all the BSS buildings that we saw, primarily because of its location in the city that had limited open spaces. But the building had enough rooms and was equipped with all the basic facilities, which could cover the needs of its 50+ inhabitants. An open terrace served the purpose of a playground. Girls and teachers had settled into the routine of the BSS when we met them after one month of it's starting up.

#### **A sample list of registers being maintained in Kishangarh BSS**

1. Base line (entry level) testing register
2. Enrolment
3. Movement register of girls
4. Parents meetings
5. Visitors register
6. Parents visit register
7. Medicine distribution
8. Immovable asset register
9. Movable items



10. Dry ration and kitchen articles
11. Health check up
12. Core team meeting
13. Community contribution
14. Daily attendance
15. Teachers' attendance
16. Daily Diary
17. Teachers profile
18. Daily Diet
19. Individual file of every girl
20. Academic Evaluation file
21. Voucher file

### Tabiji BSS

This BSS was under Pisangan block. It's located at a distance of just 30-40 kms. from Ajmer city. The building and infrastructure at Tabiji B.S.S was the best of the five BSS our team had visited. Tabiji BSS was another example of being a model BSS in terms of its infrastructure, capital and human resource investment, programme management, planning, implementation, monitoring and teaching- learning environment.

List of TLMs in one of the classrooms of Tabiji (Except one set of posters all others were hand made by teachers)

- Three illustrated story sequences from Panchtantra tales (Unity is strength, Clever crow and helpful friends)
- Charts of English and Hindi alphabets
- Illustrated Fruit charts with names in Hindi and English
- Big sized counting charts up to 100
- Parts of the body
- Number names chart
- Geometrical shapes
- Charts depicting different religious festivals of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists and their religious gurus and gods (these were printed posters)

The corridor walls had charts giving information about the time table, teacher's educational and social profile, division of daily responsibilities of the teachers, chart showing daily attendance and enrolment figures of the girls and the weight monitoring charts

There is a wealth of experience and trained human resources in LJP Ajmer at all levels which could be used to broad base the educational strategies for getting the deprived children and girls into the educational mainstream of Rajasthan.

Timetable in Tabiji	
Time	Activity
5.30 a.m.	Wake up Bell
6-30-7.00 a.m.	Yoga and exercises
7.00-7.30 a.m.	Tea and breakfast
7.30-8.30 a.m.	Bathing and dressing up
8.30-9.00 a.m.	Morning prayer session
9.00-10.30 a.m.	First study Period
10.30-12-00 a.m.	Second study period
12-2 p.m.	Lunch and rest
2-4 p.m.	Third study period
4-4.30 p.m.	Fruit snack break
4-30- 5.30 p.m.	Fourth study period



5.30-6.30 p.m.	Free play
6.30-7.30 p.m.	Dinner
7.30-8.30 p.m.	Awareness session
9-10 p.m.	Core team meeting

The day at the BSS ended with a thanksgiving –

***“Dharti Soyi, Ambar soya (Earth has gone to sleep, so has the sky)***

***Tum hi so, Ham bhi soye, (You also sleep and so will I)***

***Prabhu hai Saakshi (God is our witness)***

***Shubh Ratri, Namaskar” (Good Night and Salute)***



## Glossary

Balwadi	Crèche
BEO	Block Education Officer
BSG	Block Steering Group of Lok Jumbish
BSS	Balika Shikshan Shivir (Girls Education Camp)
Chetna Satra	One hour devoted to awareness activities in the BSS
CMHO	Chief Medical and Health Officer
Dholak	Drums
DPEP	District Primary Education Project
Durrie	Cotton or wool carpet
Gauna	Ritual marking cohabitation after marriage
Junglee	Wild
MSK	Mahila Shikshan Kendra, Mahila Samakhya Programme of GOI
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PDS	Public Distribution System
Petromax	Pressurised kerosene lamp
PHC	Primary Health Centre
Razai	Quilt
Sarpanch	Elected head of local self-government committee a the Panchayat
SC	Scheduled Caste
Shivir	Camp
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – GOI programme for Education for All
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TT	Teacher Training
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
Ward panch	Elected head of local self-government committee a the Ward Panchayat level
SSK	Sahaj Shiksha Kendra (Alternative schools run in Lok Jumbish)

