

Report on SRCT

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Monday, Jan 24, 2011

Participants: Premi, Chiara, Padmini Gopalan, Radhika Sasankh and Sridhar (Met up with Sundari Jayaraman @ school)

Saidapet school: 8 kg environments, 4 Balwadi environments

Met Sundari, Nithya and one other teacher there. The L-kg class that Nithya led was well-managed. Children were all engaged in tasks. One girl even came up and asked if she could do advanced math (multiplication aids). Nithya said she could help in a while and suggested an alternative. Girl readily agreed. As reported before, children are quiet, deliberative and careful with material.

Other classes are a mixed bag. Some teachers are Corporation-trained teachers. Some are resistant to the training, others embrace it, and still others are in the middle. This is the last batch of trainees and around 100 of them supposed to graduate this year.

One of them Ponkutti apparently led a delegation to the mayor's office protesting the adoption of Montessori. Her class was not good with kids congregated and talking and not engaged while she sat on a desk in the corner. She wanted them not to sit on the mats preferring tables/chairs. And she herself preferred to sit behind a table on a chair as opposed to walking around and helping the children.

Balwadi classes are worse off since the kids are young and of differing abilities with some joining more recently than others.

Uma Shanker meeting after lunch

Padmini Gopalan expressed concerns about how SRCT work will continue. This was the basis of the meeting with Uma, that perhaps Uma's organization in partnership with SRCT would be a better candidate to continue the work (more below).

Padmini Gopalan also expressed concern about SRCT's relevance when the corporation school teachers get trained. She wondered if perhaps the model should be one of starting a centre and then using that as training ground for corporation to catch up. Then, training and monitoring could be key.

This is why Uma Shankar's organization (CMTC -- Center of Montoessori Training, Chennai, could be interesting). It was started over 10 yrs back as a for-profit company, and now converted to a trust with a for-profit component and a non-profit component (Kalvi Trust). The fact that this is a trust enabled it to train the Corp teachers. Since there is a for-profit component, it is also a more sustainable model.

In the meeting, Uma asked if CVI could support through SRCT the procurement of materials + monitoring, and whether this could be the long-term basis of a model.

Volunteered that we'd be more in favor of that model where we train, bring in materials and then monitor the corp teachers. Uma would have the clout since she trains them, although such a model would have to have Corporation's blessing.

Materials for a school's environment around Rs. 1 lakh.