

Project “Bodhshala”

Bodhshala Nagtalai and Bodhshala Gokulpuri

Quarterly Progress Report: January, 2018 – March, 2018

Submitted to: SBI Foundation

Submitted by: Bodh Shiksha Samiti

1. Introduction: Bodhshala Nagtalai, Gokulpuri and SBI Foundation

The chief approach followed by Bodh Shiksha Samiti (referred to as Bodh hereafter) and also its most fundamental, and at its personal level, the most loved and rooted intervention in its pursuit of universal and quality education has been its parallel school set up, called **Bodhshalas**. These are community schools, which are built, owned and sustained by the community which is using the school, with Bodh and its team facilitating such ownership. These are situated both in rural and urban Rajasthan and have been intended as both mediums to bring quality education through quality curriculum and innovative pedagogy to communities that have for long suffered injustice socially, politically, economically and culturally as well as to serve as models of an alternative way of doing education, as resource and demonstration schools that can be used to inculcate similar teaching learning practices and philosophies in all schools and other organizations in the country and beyond.

There are a total of 40 Bodhshalas, 32 of them in rural Rajasthan and 8 of them in Jaipur city. This project supports two such Bodhshalas, namely Gokulpuri and Nagtalai. Both schools have been sustained by Bodh for the past 30 years. **Bodhshala Gokulpuri** was the first Bodhshala to be established in the year 1987. The slum community here has a religious mix of 40% Muslims and 60% Hindus (mainly lower castes). Most of the people in the community are daily wage labourers engaged in Rickshaw pulling or construction work. The school caters to children from pre-primary to upper primary classes. **Bodhshala Nagtalai** was established in the year 1989 and the chief source of income in the community is through daily wage and construction activity, followed by (but in very small numbers) personal trades

and small businesses. The community, comprising of a majority of Muslim population, had settled in the locality for working in the brick kilns that were set up there, which later got replaced by construction tasks. Many of the members are also involved in gem polishing and stone polishing related work. Nagtalai too caters to children from pre-primary to 5th grade.

SBI Foundation and Bodh have partnered to jointly further the cause of equitable and quality education in Bodhshalas Nagtalai and Gokulpuri. The SBI Foundation, through its association with Bodh and Bodhshalas, has strengthened its efforts towards provision of quality education to underprivileged children. The project partnership is for a period of three years from 2016 to 2019, and focuses on the following key areas of achievement and work:

- Attendance and regularity improvement
- Learning level improvement and achievement of age appropriate learning levels
- Improving community participation (including gender and member composition of meetings)
- Regular observations of classes to ensure classroom conduct aligns with Bodh's Pedagogic and curricular approach

The previous quarter (October-December, 2017) was chiefly spent on conducting the first summative examinations, consolidation of its result and its discussion with the parents. Discussions around and participation in celebration of Bodh and its Bodhshalas completing 30 years through school level events, participation in larger community meetings, central level RPMs, and participation in workshops for children also made up a major part of the previous quarter. Monthly teacher workshops were also duly held for the continuous capacity building of our diligent school teams. We began the last quarter for the academic session with the hope to bring the year to a meaningful consolidation and use key learning from the year to prepare for the coming academic session. The following sections will give a brief account of the activities and highlights of the fourth quarter, the last one for the academic session 2017-18.

2. State of Enrolments and Attendance

A. Nagtalai:

Table 1: Enrolment and gender distribution of the student group

Class	January			February			March		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre 4+	12	14	26	11	14	25	11	14	25
Pre 5+	16	15	31	15	14	29	16	14	30
I	15	20	35	15	20	35	15	20	35
II	29	26	55	29	26	55	29	26	55
III	13	19	32	13	19	32	13	19	32
IV	14	09	23	14	09	23	14	09	23
V	12	13	25	12	13	25	12	13	25
Total	111	116	227	109	115	224	110	115	226

Table 2: State of attendance for the quarter

Month	Average Attendance (%)	Average Regularity (%)
January	80	72
February	82	79
March	78	79

B. Gokulpuri:

Table 3: Enrolment, Class Wise Attendance and Gender Distribution of the Student Group

Class	Average Class-Wise Attendance			Enrolment		
	January	February	March	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre 4+	52.63	74	68	11	08	19
Pre 5+	57.14	62	52.38	12	09	21
I	66.66	75	62.50	11	13	24
II	44.44	51.85	56	13	14	27
III	56.52	52.17	48	10	13	23
IV	63.63	72.72	48	14	08	22
V	42.85	50	60.71	13	14	27

VI	71	66.66	54.16	09	15	24
Total	56.85	63.05	56.21	93	94	187

The past quarter has seen one student from class V dropping out since her family had to relocate to Ajmer.

Table 4: State of Attendance for the Quarter

Month	Average Attendance	Average Regularity
January	68	53
February	72	57
March	68	54

3. Key Activity Highlights for the Quarter

Common School Activities for Nagtalai and Gokulpuri:

- **Completion of Academic Documentation (Teacher’s Diary and Student Portfolios):** The teacher’s diary which contains the classroom plans and reflections ensure that teachers lead a classroom with a plan in mind for effective teaching and learning. The teacher’s diary of all teachers at the school level for both the schools have been completed and maintained up to date. All forms of assessments taken during the quarter have been duly filed in the children’s portfolios.
- **Completion of School’s Administrative Documentation:** All of the school’s administration related documentation, such as maintenance of student and teacher attendance records, leave records, school stock records and updates, the SR register, library documentation (books issues and general cataloguing of available books and those required) etc. have been duly completed for the quarter.
- **Conduct of Classroom Observations:** Regular classroom observations have been conducted by the Principal Teachers in both schools. These observations are around the pointers of checking coordination and sink between the teacher’s plans and actual execution of the plans, the classroom display’s usefulness and appropriateness, the student-teacher rapport, support provided to the children below class level. These are then talked about and given feedback on during the review and planning meetings.
- **Planning and Review meetings with the teachers:** Review and planning meetings conducted by the principal teacher with the school’s academic team have been conducted

regularly in both schools. While Gokulpuri has RPMs on a weekly basis (these meetings being short but frequent discussions and sharing sessions instead of fewer longer sessions), Nagtalai has monthly RPMs (fewer but longer and more detailed sessions per month) and has thus had 3 RPMs with the teachers this quarter. These RPMs chiefly focused on discussions around the upcoming board examinations of children of class V, with teachers of all subjects collectively discussing how to go about the preparations, how to prepare the children who are below class level, analysing the question paper format and making preparation strategies.

- **Contact with Parents and sharing of student’s academic level with them:** There have been one PTM in each of the schools for the quarter and other community level meetings where also the issue of learning levels and possible ways of improving them have been raised.
- **Review and Planning Meetings with Principal Teachers at the Central Office:** Three programme level review and planning meetings took place at the central office in Kukas, where principal teachers and coordinators of both schools participated. Through these the schools have participated in discussion on the events for the celebration of our journey of 30 years, on the state of school attendance and regularity and the reasons for the same, on the state of collection of school support funds, on academic support required, on material provision, on learning levels and solutions sought on issues such as school’s infrastructural needs.
- **Community and SMC meetings:** In Gokulpuri there have been 6 community meetings in this quarter, 2 of them being community meetings to discuss the board exam preparations and processes and the growing issue of student irregularity. One of them was an SMC meeting to discuss the possible infrastructure needs of the school and to plan for greater and complete enrolment in the coming quarter. One of them has been a meeting of the women’s group to discuss how to make the group more regular and effective and two parent teacher meetings have been organised to share academic and non-academic progress of the children. The 30 year celebration program has been a key element if discussion and decision making in all these meetings. In Nagtalai, 2 community meetings have taken place during the quarter, whereby the chief pointers of discussion were the state of school affairs and construction works,

- **School level planning meetings for 30 year celebration event:** The quarter, particularly the beginning month was buzzing with planning and preparation meetings for the celebration of the completion of 30 years of operation for Bodh and its Bodhshalas. The decisions regarding the various performances and elements of the event, the attending members, food and refreshments, the representation of the school's journey, the setting up and renewal of school display and decorations, performances by children, contact with the alumnae and old teachers etc. were all made during these planning sessions between the school team, the central office and the communities.
- **Community Contact:** In both schools teachers have conducted weekly or bi-weekly visits to the children's home in the community, where they share not only the child's progress and status at school, but also try to grasp the social situations at home, the everyday negotiations these communities face, the child's behavioural aspects at home, and collectively exploring sources of academic support and help that may be able to be provided at home. Community members are also encouraged to take greater interest in school events and decisions and participate with greater ownership.
- **Monthly Teacher Workshops at Kukas:** Monthly workshops for the teachers of both the bodhshalas were conducted in each of the three months, where the subject specific challenges in classroom practices were discussed. The key focus of the teacher workshops has been on preparations for the board examinations, drawing out maps and ladders of concepts to be taught, different ways the below class level children could be brought to a level where they could attempt a common class level paper.

Key School Specific Activities

A. Nagtalai:

- **Classroom pedagogical practices:** The teachers have collectively made the conscious effort to include as much play, games and physical activity based pedagogy in their subject pedagogies as possible and they have been displaying this consistently through their planning and class execution during the quarter.
- **Efforts at library integration:** Including the use of library in a planned manner was decided by the teachers of particularly English and Hindi Languages.

- **Educational exposure visits:** Classes 4th and 5th were taken to the planetarium (Taramandal) where they learnt about the universe and its mysteries and were very excited and vocal about the wonder they felt at knowing that so much existed beyond the confines of their homes and schools and how small they felt at knowing the vastness of the world. Children of Pre and early grades were taken to Nehru Udyaan and they had a wonderful time exploring it and made pictures of what they liked and saw.
- **Celebratory event at Bodh's 30 years completion:** The 30 year completion programme at Nagtalai was held on the 27th January, 2018 where around 2500 people including community members, children, alumnae and teachers attended. The community remarkably and voluntarily rose around Rs. 20,000 for organising and executing the programme which shows the deep sense of ownership they feel for their Bodhshala. The programme was conducted successfully with performances by the children, address by Yogendra ji, the narration of several accounts of the school's journey by the teachers and other members who had seen its beginning days, the alumnae were honoured and so was the current and past teaching team of Nagtalai. A collective community lunch followed.
- **On-going remediation through Shiksha Ghar:** The Shiksha Ghar endeavour has been successfully and regularly carried out and came to a close at the end of this semester. Some of our tiny teachers will be joining us through participation in this session's Shiksha Samar programme and this group will restart once regular classes for the next session commence by the end of June, 2018.
- **Youth group update:** Sasha Priyo, Senior Fellow at Bodh has begun an initiative where he spends the weekend teaching English to those in our youth group, a group of young pass outs from school who are determined to pursue further studies or jobs and have found guidance and study space in Nagtalai. Also there are now monthly meeting of youth group to guide them in terms of what exams and openings may be coming up and how to prepare for them.
- **Celebration of Republic day:** The republic day was celebrated with joy and vigour on the 26th of January with small student performances and addresses by the school team on why we celebrate the day and how it holds significance for us even today.
- **Preparation for board class:** Class V has been studying hard and the teachers working very hard to prepare them in the best possible manner. The below class children are being given special attention and are being given extra time through Shiksha Ghar.

B. Gokulpuri:

- **Educational exposure visit:** The children from classes I and II were taken to the Govind Dev Mandir Garden for an educational excursion. The children had a wonderful time playing and then described their experiences in classroom discussions and through drawings.
- **Project work for primary:**All subjects, but EVS in particular have seen the incorporation of a lot of project work and outdoor fact finding activities for children. This helps sharpen the children's higher order thinking skills and makes them organised and systematic in their work and thoughts. Children also studied food and nutrition and held a class discussion on the various kinds, and importance of different kinds of food for a healthy body and mind through charts that they collectively prepared in groups.
- **Renewed focus on games pedagogy:**Children have been exposed to a lot of new indoor and outdoor games during play period as well as in the plans for other subject classes. The open space at the back of the school is now being used as play space for the children.
- **Innovative practices in the morning assembly:**We have been trying to make the morning assemblies more interesting through the inclusion of various current issues and social issues as discussion topics during the assembly. We are also trying to make these assemblies multilingual (Hindi, English and local dialects)
- **Celebratory event at Bodh's 30 years completion:**The 30 year completion programme at Gokulpuri was held on the 5th February, 2018 where around 1000 people including community members, children, alumnae and teachers attended. The community remarkably and voluntarily rose around Rs. 20,000 for organising and executing the programme which shows the deep sense of ownership they feel for their Bodhshala. The programme was conducted successfully with performances by the children, address by Yogendra ji, the narration of several accounts of the school's journey by the teachers and other members who had seen its beginning days, the alumnae were honoured and so was the current and past teaching team of Nagtalai. A collective community lunch followed.
- **Operating the women's group:**The women's group had to unfortunately be stopped in the month of February because of low and irregular attendance. We however are planning for its revival and will try our best to restart it in September, 2018 after we

conduct a round of community visits and surveys to mobilise and convince the community's women and their families to enrol and complete their education.

- **Questionnaire creation and execution by children in EVS class**
- **Preparation for board class:** Classes V has been studying hard and the teachers are working very hard to prepare them in the best possible manner. The below class children are being given special attention and are being given extra time post regular school hours.

4. State of Student Learning levels

Table 5: Learning levels at Nagtalai

Class	Enrolment	Hindi					Mathematics					English				
		L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
V	25	-	3	4	3	15	-	-	4	6	15	-	3	4	3	15
IV	23	-	4	7	12	-	-	2	9	12	-	3	2	6	12	-
III	32	5	5	22	-	-	5	6	21	-	-	5	10	17	-	-
II	55	16	39	-	-	-	15	40	-	-	-	18	37	-	-	-
I	35	35	-	-	-	-	35	-	-	-	-	35	-	-	-	-
Total	170	56	51	33	15	15	55	48	34	18	15	61	52	27	15	15

Table 2: Learning levels at Gokulpuri

Class	Hindi		Mathematics		English	
	on level	below level	on level	below level	on level	below level
I	24	-	24	-	24	-
II	15	12	18	09	12	15
III	15	08	15	08	05	18
IV	13	09	14	08	00	22
V	16	11	14	13	12	15
VI	17	07	14	10	12	12
Total	67.56%	32.44%	66.89	33.11	43.11%	56.09%

5. Key Challenges During the Quarter

A. Nagtalai

- It has been a challenging process to bring every child to class level, particularly with teachers shifting and changing frequently. We have analysed the summative performance of children from November, have made new level groups for the children and are working with our teachers to come up with new ways to accelerate their learning. We require and will seek this coming session, greater capacity building and academic support from the ERC.
- Teachers leaving mid-session frequently is one of our gravest challenges and we are deliberating on possible ways to prevent such mid-session breaks in academic flow for the children. More time should be spent on the training period of the new teachers who join to ensure adequate mentorship and to ensure they are exposed to the real ideals and rationale behind the Bodhshalas and education in Bodhshalas.
- Several construction projects have to be undertaken for the betterment of the school space and some are on-going.
- Better arrangements need to be made for provision of water in the school since the summer months are arriving and safe drinking water provision will be essential.

B. Gokulpuri:

- Children's attendance has been erratic and hasn't been consistent which has been problematic for us. We are trying to better this by increasing our community interactions.
- Teachers not completing their terms or not completing a full academic session are a crucial challenge the solution to which we still haven't concretely found or tried out.
- The prolonged lack of an experienced, qualified and aware of Bodh's educational value system, guide teacher in the subject of English has been a major hurdle for advancement and acceleration possibilities within English.

6. Key Achievements During the Quarter

A. Nagtalai:

- The Shiksha Ghar initiative, wherein after school remedial support is provided by our student volunteers, has been run smoothly and effectively for a year now with the end of this academic session.
- Children attending the after school remediation regularly have shown a rise in their learning levels. Even those who haven't made complete level jumps have made good progress in terms of new and important concepts understood well which will help them with their regular on-going school hour classes.
- The women's group will also have completed one year of successful operation with this academic session drawing to a close. The group initially lost out on a few of the members, all of whom couldn't attend regularly because of reason that unfortunately they couldn't control (moving from the city, marriage or family disapproval). However we now have a stable batch of women who attend the classes regularly and are determined to complete their education.
- We have successfully met our target of being able to maintain an average attendance of 80%.
- The community has become a much more active contributor to the school, its operation, its decisions and its teaching-learning processes.
- The school has got fencing done and completed this quarter.
- Youth group English teaching program.

B. Gokulpuri

- The enrolment of the school has improved after consistent and honest efforts by the school team. It has risen to 193 in the academic session of 2017-18 from that of 158 in the previous session.
- The no of drop outs have significantly been brought down from 34 in the academic session of 2016-17 to 8 in this session.
- The women's group was re-started in operation from the month of January.

- The SMC was re-constituted successfully and the relations with community are stronger now. This academic session has seen intensified community contact by the school team, which has reflected in the increased enrolments and decreased drop outs as mentioned above. We hope we can maintain such trusting relations with the community.
- The community support fund that the community voluntarily collectively contributes for the operation and improvement of the Bodhshala, has increased in the amount collected from Rs. 38,847 in the session 2016-17 to Rs. 72,200 in this academic session, which is a very big financial support for the school and shows the community's resolve to make the school better and to claim ownership of it by taking charge of its sustainability.
- The community has shown renewed interest in the events and affairs of the school.
- Children have shown a greater solidarity as a school student body. Teachers have noticed distinctly better behaviour in terms of playing well together, reduced incidents of fights, eating together; bring lunch boxes from home and sharing them etc. Children seemed at ease and happy, which is actually our most ultimate goal.

7. Some best practices from the classrooms for the quarter

A. Nagtalai:

English and Hindi: We noticed a recurring problem of children misspelling words. As they progressed from being unable to read to being able to read simple words and sentences, a constant point of error in children's work was them not remembering the correct spellings of the words. This was an indicator that children were not fully clear on letter-sound associations. Even for those who understand it, words in English are not always written as per their pronunciation and hence knowing the correct spelling is a separate task and we thought we should address it. The children were given 3-5 spellings of words done in the class that day to learn, write and practice at home. They were asked to write the spellings on a paper and decorate it as they wished and if they could spell and tell the class the spelling of the words the next day without looking, their paper would go up on the word wall. Children put all their hearts into making these spelling sheets and learnt them too to ensure theirs went on the wall.

English: The objective of this activity was to introduce the ‘wh’ question word of ‘what’ and learn to answer them with ‘This is/these are/those are’ simple sentences. The children were told to pair up in twos and make a list of all the things that they can see around them in the classroom and in their immediate surrounding outside of the class. Then each pair had to come in the front of the class and take turns asking each other questions about what they had listed and answer them. For e.g. ‘What is this?’ ‘This is a ball’; ‘What are those?’ ‘Those are chairs’ etc. The activity helped them understand we use ‘what’ generally to ask about things and how to answer them. We plan to do the same activity for the word ‘who’ by telling children to list the people and living things they see around them and then ask ‘who is that?’ ‘Who are those?’ questions.

B. Gokulpuri:

EVS: The children have been made to engage in several group project based work where they create something after and through class discussions. They children created a display of the different kinds of nests that different birds make and why the nests are made that way, based on a lesson in their book (called ‘ चूँ चूँ करती आयी चिड़ियाँ’). They were showed pictures of many different kinds of nests and birds who made them and we discussed in class why each nest was the way it was and how smart birds could be while building their houses. They collected some materials like twigs and grass and leaves and stones to create the nests. Another project work they did this quarter was on forests and all that one sees in a forest. Children drew pictures of deserts, of dry landscapes and sparse trees and other vegetation, and also of lakes and other water sources. They drew rains and a greener landscape during rains.

Mathematics: The children were made to sit in groups of five. Each group was given a bunch of match sticks and we used match sticks to make and learn about different kinds of geometrical shapes, how many sides, vertices and angles each shape has, how many kinds of lines are there (straight, slanted, curved etc.). The children made many different kinds of figures and wrote down specifications for those figures too.

English: This activity was to enhance reading and listening skills. The children were each given cards with a group of words written on them. The teacher would call out

the words one by one, and whoever's card had the word being announced had to identify it on the card and tick it off. The teacher would check everyone's card at the end after all the words have been read out and those who still had not ticked off some of the words that had been called out would be children who couldn't listen to a word being spoken and associate the written form of the word with it. It was a fun game like Housie and children enjoyed it, making reading fun!

8. Broad plan for the next quarter

A. Nagtalai:

- To increase enrolment from the current 225 to 260.
- To conduct a productive and meaningful orientation for the new teachers who will be joining us. Given the high attrition rate among teachers, the orientation and how it sets forth our ideas and meanings of education to the teacher is an important step in eliminating this recurrent and serious constraint we have been facing.
- Getting a tin shed installed for the new building and getting the necessary repairs done in the old one.
- To keep up the operation of the women's group and ensure regularity improvement within it.
- Creation of new TLMs using guidance from the ERC and the monthly workshops.
- Organising the library class and level wise.
- Conducting the second and final summative for the session 2017-18, result compilation and sharing with parents.
- Selection of children and volunteers for the summer remediation program, 'Shiksha Samar' and participation in the plans for conducting the program.
- Discussing the key events, learning and challenges with the school team and collectively drawing up an annual plan for the next academic session.

B. Gokulpuri:

- Improving the enrolment of the school.
- To raise the number of girls in every class.

- Attempting to raise the regularity and attendance of children to the bracket of 95%-100%.
- Improving the state of the children's portfolio, making it more organised and regular.
- Ensuring the right mix of student created and children created display in the classroom.
- Getting computer education started in the school.
- Creating small in class collection of books, class wise and level wise.
- Reconstituting the SMC and taking decisions about the possibilities of creating a playground for the children.
- Adding at least 15 more women to the women's group and ensuring regularity of the group, the existing members and the new ones.
- Making assessments a regular part of the women's group classes as well to get adequate feedback on the teaching and learning processes and outcomes.
- Construction and repair plans: fixing nets in the windows, repairing doors of the halls and toilets, increasing height of the walls and putting a tin shed, getting R.O installed, getting a wash basin installed for washing hands, installing floor tiles etc.
- Intensifying community interaction through more frequent visits, monthly student level sharing meetings and involving them in all key decisions of the school.

9. Classroom Chronicles: Case studies from Nagtalai and Gokulpuri

A. Nagtalai:

Our Academic Achievers: Nagma and Ayaan at Nagtalai

Nagma and Ayaan Abbasi are students of Bodhshala Nagtalai. Nagma studies in class 4 and is the daughter of Kamruddin and Rabina who are jewels worker and housewife respectively. Ayaan studies in class 2 and is the son of Sajida Bano and Javid Abbasi . Both of them have a similar story of progress and positive change in the classroom and hence are being narrated together. Both the children were easily irritable, got into fights very frequently, wouldn't share their things and would perform badly in any group based activity. Nagma's learning level was that of class 2 while that of Ayaan was even less than that of class 1.

Through regular dialogue with them in the classroom, activities conducted specifically to highlight the importance and joy of sharing, team spirit building activities and regular contact

with the child's parents, both children can now attempt and work at their age appropriate class level that is class 4 and class 1 respectively. Ayaan now shares both his belongings and his feelings and thoughts with his classmates and teachers and has made many new friends and is happier which reflects in his academic achievement too. He also takes greater interest in all subjects and has shown the tendencies of taking responsibilities with conviction such as monitoring the class or distribution and collection and filing of the worksheets, making sure the class is in order, checking the display is in place correctly and informing the teacher of any of the display material gets damaged etc. He has promised his teachers that he will not be absent without reason and will always inform the teachers if he cannot come to school for a genuine reason. His parents said that he loved to play and can do any task given to him if you make it into a game of some kind which is why we have been trying to incorporate games in the classroom pedagogy of all subjects as much as possible.

Nagma has gone through a similar evolution as a student and has become much more receptive to and friendly and cooperative with the teachers and fellow classmates. She has also successfully reached her age appropriate class level from that of level 2. She has shown particular improvement in Mathematics and Hindi and has shown a growing interest in these subjects. She has progressed to operations with 5 digit numbers and can understand more complex shape patterns and in Hindi can make simple sentences to express what she feels and can create simple stories. She likes and actively participates in group songs (Baalgeet) and poem and story reading and narration and is more confident of herself now.

B. Gokulpuri:

From Fights to Focus: Meenakshi at Gokulpuri

Meenakshi is a student of Bodhshala Gokulpuri and is studying in class 2. She is the daughter of Manju and Subhash who engage in daily wage labour, mostly as construction workers, to earn a living. In addition to the gap in her learning levels and the academic lag that there was with Meenakshi, a more pressing concern with her was her classroom behaviour and strained interactions within the classroom. Meenakshi would constantly engage in fights, would behave in a rude manner with fellow students and teachers, was known to sometimes inflict physical hurt on fellow classmates in classroom fights, would take things that belonged to others without asking and engage in fights over those. All of these instances and behavioural

conducts caused her to lack focus and the teachers were finding it difficult to productively engage her in any way.

The school and its teaching team along with Meenakshi's parents had almost reached the consensus that the child would have to be taken out of school. However, we decided to give it more effort and another chance. We started with a round of intense discussions and regular dialogue with Meenakshi's parents and made it a point to conduct regular visits to her home so that she got a sense of familiarity with the teachers, felt comfortable in their presence outside of school as well, talked more freely in her home environment than in the classroom environment that she found hostile. Her parents, who had previously given up on her and had thought she would not be able to attend regular school, were also encouraged to constantly give her the space to settle down and create her own comfort zone within the school setting. They also became regular with keeping track of her school and home work.

A key practice that helped us significantly was to give the child her own space to develop ways to engage in the classroom instead of forcing the already established norms of the classroom on her, to which she was alien. We allowed her to sit anywhere she wanted and allowed her to engage in any task (even if it wasn't academic classroom work that the rest of the children in the class were doing). She would go sit in different corners and spaces of the classroom observe and try to read the display in the classroom, tried to make some of her own pictures with their own meaning, observed children doing their work and gradually began to come to the teacher herself to ask for work to do.

Academically work with her has shown a good improvement too. It has been a slow and gradual process and a lot needs to be achieved still. However, the key element of positive change here was the beginning of the development of the will to learn and the confidence to be able to learn. What was important, and the lesson from this instance was that both of these were allowed to develop organically by the child, and wasn't forced on her in any way. She can now read and recognise letters in Hindi and English, can read pictures and can orally answer and respond to simple instructions and questions based on stories told in the class. Another significant improvement has been in her attendance and regularity in coming to school. She came to school 7-8 days out of the 25 working days of school in a month initially but now comes 20-21 days a month which is a very significant improvement. Her time on task, that is, the time for which she can remain engaged in the tasks given to her, has also significantly improved. Work still needs to continue towards integrating her into the larger

class collective and small actions such as encouraging the class to clap for her or show other forms of appreciation for her and include her in their conversations etc. are being ensured to allow her to feel a positive, collaborative learning environment at Bodhshala Gokulpuri.
