

**HALF YEARLY  
MONITORING REPORT OF  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT,  
CALCUTTA  
ON SSA FOR  
UNION TERRITORY OF ANDAMAN &  
NICOBAR ISLANDS  
FOR THE PERIOD  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007**

**DISTRICTS COVERED**

**Andaman  
Nicobar Islands**



## **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**

### **Report of the IIM Calcutta Monitoring Team**

#### **A. Background**

The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta had been assigned, by the MHRD, the task of monitoring the SSA in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The IIMC team had visited the Union Territory first in March 2004 and was to revisit the region again in December that year. The Tsunami devastation which occurred on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 devastated the region and relief operations and disaster management programmes took priority over all other development activities in the UT. During the Tenth Five year plan, the schedule for monitoring was reworked by the meetings of the monitoring agencies, EDCIL and MHRD representatives and was fixed in the year 2007-08 for monitoring visit to the Islands. A team of two members comprising of Professor Raghavendra Chattopadhyay as project director and coordinator and Professor Subir Bhattacharya as the other project director was formed by IIMC for this purpose.

The monitoring team found that the number of elementary schools in the region has actually gone down from 321 in pre-Tsunami days (2004) to 287 by 2006-07 as per DISE Data for the UT. In view of the small number and the inaccessibility of the islands in the UT, the team decided to physically verify the school conditions by themselves visiting as many schools as possible. The team thus chalked out a programme in consultation with the SPO, for a period of seven days. It was also decided to analyze the latest available DISE data for the UT to get a comprehensive picture of the SSA in the islands.

Given below the observations on the basis of our visit and discussions with different stakeholders during the period. The only official whom we could not meet during our visit, due to his extreme business, was the director, SSA himself. The format of the report is thus: Section B gives the details of the schedule of our visit. Section C summarizes our findings at each of the schools visited. In Section D, we give some general observations. Our recommendations are given in Section E. The analyses of DISE data will be taken up separately and a separate report will soon be made on that.

#### **B. Schedule of Visit**

The Monitoring Team, comprising of Prof. Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Prof. Subir Bhattacharya of IIM Calcutta, reached Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in the morning of January 7, 2008. The Team was received by Mr. S. K. Singh of the State Project Office. Due to lack of time, only one school, viz. the Model School at Port Blair could be visited on that day.

The Team visited the Block Education Office of Wimberlygunj in South Andaman on January 8, 2008 and, after initial interactions with the officials present, spent the whole

day visiting quite a few randomly selected schools and interacting with the students and the teachers. A total of seven schools could be covered within the school time.

The Team spent next two days – January 9 and 10, 2008 – visiting schools at the Car Nicobar island. The Team visited a total of seven schools in the island.

On January 11 and 12, 2008, the Team covered schools under the Baratang CRC in Middle Andaman. A total of six schools were visited. The Team also interacted with the children and the dwellers of a small settlement of seven-eight families who have settled in the remote island (Nayadera) of the Lime Cave. The settlement has no access to any facilities of the modern world like electricity, medicine, telephone, road, or school.

The Team returned to Kolkata on January 13, 2008.

## **C. Observations during visits to schools**

### **C.1 Schools visited in Wimberlygunj**

#### ***Government Primary School at Shoal Bay No. 8***

The school started in 1978. Housed in a pucca building, this primary school now teaches about 32 students spread over five classes. Both the teachers and most of the students were present on the day of the visit. The parents of most of the students are illiterate forest labours. The school is quite meticulous in keeping record of its facts and figures.

#### ***Government Middle School at Wrighmyo***

The school is housed in a semi-pucca building. Out of an enrolled strength of 80 students, spread over eight classes, about 75 were present on the day of the visit.

#### ***Government Middle School at Kanyapuram***

In sharp contrast to the Middle School at Wrighmyo, this is a huge school, housed in a sprawled pucca building, with enrolments of 166 students in the primary section and 264 students in the middle section. On the day of the visit the attendance in the primary and middle sections were 130 and 224 respectively. All the teachers, including 15 PSTs and 15 GTTs were present. The school offers three different media of instruction.

Midday meal was being served at the time of our visit. Throughout the islands, midday meal is either contracted out to or is cooked in the school kitchen by selected Dogra/Self Help groups. Budget per student per day is Rs. 4/-. Because of exorbitant price of vegetables in the islands, the usual menu at most of the schools is rice and dal with some vegetables in it. At Wimberlygunj, the contractors cook the food at central places, and serve the nearby schools. At Kanyapuram, food was brought in clean steel vessels in an autorickshaw. The quality of rice was reasonably good. The amount of rice given to each student also appeared to be reasonable. Second help was available

to students who asked for it if some food remained after everybody was served in the first round.

After the schools at Shoal Bay and Wrighmyo that yearned for students in the big classrooms, this school with reasonably filled classrooms was a pleasant surprise.

#### ***Government Primary School at Mathura***

This school, again housed in a semi-pucca building, has an enrolment of 28 students out of which 25 were present in the five classes. The school has, apart from the Headmaster, 4 PSTs, 1 PCC and 1 SCM. The medium of instruction is Hindi. Last VEC meeting was on November 29, 2007 with most of the members present.

Next to the building that currently houses the school, there stands a row of recently built rooms apparently complete in all respect. This was explained to be the new school building that has been there for sometime and yet cannot be used due to lack of approach road to the building.

#### ***Government Primary School at Saithankhari***

This is another Hindi medium primary school that has an enrolment of 28 students and had 25 students present during the visit. The school has 4 teachers including the Headmaster. The school has two computers. The reason for assigning two computers to this school, while no computer is available in many schools, was not clear. Incidentally, the school currently stores substantial amount of material for disaster management in one of its rooms. This room houses a class as well.

The VEC meets about once in six months. Out of six members of the VEC, three are women.

#### ***Government Primary School at Shore Point***

This is an excellent Telegu medium school located on a beautiful spot close to the sea. It is housed in a well planned pucca building well maintained and well utilized. In contrast to the primary schools seen before, this school has an enrolment of 83 of which 72 were present on the day of the visit. Apart from the Headmaster, the school has five PSTs. All the PSTs were present and were in their classes at the time of our visit. However, this school does not have a computer. It was a pleasing experience to visit this school.

#### ***Government Primary School at Hopetown***

This is another Primary school that has impressive number of students. Out of 104 enrolled, 92 students were present on the day of visit. This Hindi medium school caters to children of parents who are mostly Telegu fisherman. The school has 6 teachers apart from the Headmistress. Out of them, one has been on leave for quite sometime, and two others were on leave on the day of the visit.

The VEC has met three times in last six months to discuss various issues. The VEC has only one female member. This school also does not have a computer.

## **C.2 Schools visited in Car Nicobar**

The island with about 49 sq. km. area had most of its hamlets along the coastline. During Tsunami in 2004, many of these hamlets got devastated with enormous loss of life and property. The villages are since then been relocated towards the inner part of the island. Though substantial portion of the infrastructure has already put in place, many of the relocated schools are still being operated from temporary locations.

### ***Government Middle School at Kinmai***

This school is currently housed in a pucca building. Right now, this middle school has classes from I to VI. Classes for VII and VIII will be added subsequently. There are 99 students on roll – 61 boys and 38 girls. On the day of the visit, a total of 64 were present – 43 boys and 21 girls. Among the eight teachers, besides the Headmaster, three were absent on January 9, the day of visit. Just concluded festive season among the Christian dominated student population was cited as the possible reason for the large number of absentees. The last VEC meeting was held on September 20, 2007.

### ***Government Secondary School at Mus***

This secondary school is one of the old schools in the region. Part of the school is housed in pucca building while the rest is operated from sheds made of corrugated tins. This school has 234 students on roll – 107 boys and 127 girls. Out of them 87 boys and 97 girls – a total of 184 students – were present on the day of visit. The school has two media of instruction – Hindi and English. The school has no GTT in mathematics in either medium, no GTT in science in Hindi medium. Right now, the school is managing using 9 SSCTs – 1 in science, 1 in mathematics and 7 in Arts. In the current academic year, books reached the school about 2 months into the year. The school has 4 computers.

### ***Government Primary School at Jayanthi***

This primary school is currently being operated from temporary sheds. Out of the total strength of 91 tribal students, 71 students were present. All, except one, of the 9 teachers, including the headmaster, were also present. Midday meal was being served at the time of our visit. The arrangements, cleanliness, and the quantity and quality of food served were quite satisfactory.

### ***Government Senior Science School at Biglathi***

Located in a pucca building close to the primary school mentioned above, this school has two media of instructions – Hindi and English. The school has been newly relocated here and was in the process of getting adjusted.

### ***Government Senior Secondary School at Sawai***

This Senior Secondary school is operating from temporary sheds arranged around a large portico. Right now, the school has classes up to VIII. New constructions are going on in nearby location. Out of the total enrolment of 201 students – 102 boys

and 99 girls – 139 students, 68 boys and 71 girls, were present on the day of the visit. Two of the 16 teachers were absent. Last PTA meeting was held on August 10, 2007.

***Government Primary School at Kniyuka***

This primary school is also being operated in a temporary shed. This Hindi medium school has 45 boys and 56 girls on the roll, out of which 37 boys and 53 girls – a total of 90 out of 101 enrolled – were present. An open space with only a makeshift roof on it was being used as the teachers' room. All the five teachers were present. The last PTA meeting was held on April 3, 2007.

***Government Middle School at Chukchuka***

This Hindi medium Middle School has 254 students on roll – 138 boys and 116 girls. On the day of our visit 164 students were present. All the 12 teachers were also present. This school again is operating from a mix of pucca and semi-pucca rooms spread out around a huge ground. The books for this year were received only recently.

**C.3 Schools visited in Baratang**

***Government Senior Secondary School at Oralkatcha***

This is the only Senior Secondary school in the CRC. Till class VIII, 159 boys and 171 girls are on roll for the two media of instructions, Hindi and English. Out of them, 136 boys and 146 girls were present on January 11, the day of our visit. All the 12 teachers were present. The school has its own kitchen for preparation of midday meal. Cooking and distribution is done by an SHG. The school has a well maintained computer lab with reasonably fast internet connections. The school is located in pucca buildings. It was a good, vibrant, clean school to visit.

***Government Secondary School at Adazig***

This secondary school is located in pucca building. The school, with generally good upkeep, is in the process of building its own kitchen for midday meal. On the day of the visit, attendance was a little more than 80% among the students. Among 187 students (102 boys and 85 girls) enrolled in Classes I to VIII, 79 boys and 72 girls were present. All the 15 teachers were also present. The school, right now, does not have a computer. However, one has been approved and is expected soon. The teachers have been through trainings on Computer Applications sometime in 2006. Guardians of 5 children want to admit their wards in the school. They have so far not been allowed since they do not have Date of Birth certificates. The school was advised to take necessary steps to admit the students with their DoB certified by the local Panchayat or the VEC.

***Government Primary School at Lorozig***

This primary school is being run from a temporary shade hoisted with the help of bamboo poles and dry leaves. The school is located in forest land and it appears that no construction of permanent/semi-permanent structure is being allowed by the Forest department. As a result, the school is in bad shape. The school has an enrollment of

15 boys and 10 girls, out of which 12 boys and 8 girls were present on the day of the visit. Both the teachers were also present.

#### ***Government Middle School at South Creek***

The school with a combination of pucca and semi-pucca buildings is located on a slope. Out of enrolled strength of 243 students, 115 boys and 128 girls, 200 were present on the day of the visit. 12 out of the 13 teachers were also present. Many of these students come from far flung areas, sometimes covering a distance of 3 kms on foot, trudging through mud during rains. Parents of most of the children are non-literates with poor economic conditions. Thus it is a Herculean task to keep the students motivated to come to the school. The toilet of the school is in bad shape. A new toilet section has been approved, but PWD has not been able to start work because of resistance from the forest department. The matter is pending for quite some time. Out of the two computers, one was temporarily out of order.

#### ***Government Middle School at Zarwa Creek***

This middle school has 137 students on roll – 47 students in Classes I to V and 90 in classes VI to VIII. Out of them, 116 were present on the day of the visit. All teachers, except one, were also present. The low enrolment in the primary section was explained to be due to a couple of Primary schools in the feed area. The school has a well-built toilet structure but, surprisingly, it is not used due to water scarcity problem.

#### ***Government Primary School at Rajatgarh***

This primary school has an enrolment of 21 students – 2, 3, 5, 7 and 4 in classes I, II, III, IV and V respectively. The school is not easily accessible by road. The school has a modest pucca structure. When the school was visited a little after midday mealtime, the students have left after midday meal due to acute water scarcity problem. According to attendance register, only two students were absent. Both the teachers were present. The school does not have usual classroom infrastructure of tables and benches.

### **D Some General Observations**

- (a) The current State Project Director (SPD) is extremely busy with too many responsibilities shouldered by him. In addition to being SPD, he is also the Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Special Secretary Education cum Director Education, and, recently, also took over charge as Deputy Commissioner consequent to nomination as IAS. As a result, he hardly has time to guide SSA activities. He even could not find time to meet, or interact with, the monitoring team during its weeklong visit. This has been a major demotivating factor for people who have been working hard for years towards universalizing elementary education in the UT. In effect, the most active members in the State Project Office appears to be the three contract employees, including Mr.S.K. Singh, who have been hired after their retirement from different educational positions in the Islands.

- (b) Many of the schools visited in the South and Middle Andamans have elaborate infrastructure in place for water harvesting. Unfortunately, none of them was operational due to some or other reasons. Unless these are put to use, a huge investment will go waste.
- (c) Scarcity of water appears to be a major deterrent for smooth running of schools, or for developing hygienic toilet habits among students in the Middle Andaman area.
- (d) Schools located in forest land are facing resistance from forest authority in upgrading their infrastructure. This is particularly true in the Andaman Islands where a greater number of migrant population from Jharkhand region have settled after they were brought in as workers in forest clearance and road building. The problem appears to be a long standing one, and needs attention at the highest level to be resolved.
- (e) Most of teachers in the Nicobar Islands are from outstation places. They find it difficult to arrange accommodations. Also, time hangs heavy in their hands after school hours.
- (f) Children from small settlements in far flung areas have hardly any opportunity to attend school. As experienced by the Team during its visit to Nayadera, a small hamlet with about 25 families, children have to walk 4 to 5 kms to reach the nearest school. While the population is too small to warrant a school, there is no feasible/affordable conveyance to take them to the nearest school which is quite far off.
- (g) Out of seven Primary schools visited in the Andamans, 5 had quite low enrolments in the range of 21 to 32 spread over five classes.
- (h) In the Andamans, motivation among the parents, mostly forest labour, to send their wards to school is quite low. The Team met a student in one primary school, whose younger brother is not usually sent to the school by their parents.

#### **E. Some Recommendations**

- (i) The Union Territory should have a dedicated SPD to guide and monitor the SSA activities. Efforts should be made to motivate personnel like Mr. S. K. Singh, who have been associated with SSA in the UT for years and are doing a commendable job.
- (ii) Water supply arrangements in the schools should be looked into.

- (iii) Many a middle/secondary school suffers from non-availability of adequate teachers in science, particularly in mathematics. Special attention need to be given to overcome this deficiency.
- (iv) The ongoing standoff with the Forest department needs to be resolved at the earliest so that infrastructure in the schools located on forest land could be build up to help smooth running of these schools.
- (v) Midday meal programme is going on quite smoothly in the islands. However, cost of food items, particularly vegetables, is quite high in the islands. So it is advisable to have slightly higher than usual per student rate for midday meals. This would allow the students to enjoy some vegetables.
- (vi) The UT needs to address the problems of falling enrolment in many of its primary schools while, at the same time, failing to arrange schooling facilities at remote settlements, particularly in the islands of the Andamans. One way tackling the problem could be to set up a few fully residential schools at convenient locations with clearly identified catchment area. The schools should be financed completely by SSA. Since there would be only a few such schools, proper attention can be paid to each of these to become model schools. The students, resident of the well-managed hostels of the school, will be able to spend their time, in other recreational, creative and vocational activities, apart from their studies. These schools, on one hand, would allow consolidation of infrastructure and resources while, on the other hand, would facilitate holistic development of students that would keep them motivated to continue with their studies, and would help develop community feelings.

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