

RTC STUDENT PROFILE

(Rajaram and Priyanka - Dec 2023)

Asha has several programs for reaching students all the way from first standard to twelfth. Till 2020 we were working only with primary and middle school students. During the Corona days, we were running mini-schools for primary and middle school children. Every once in a while we used meet students who have passed out of our Asha supported schools studying in high or higher secondary schools. They will often longingly ask us why Asha doesn't support their school. It felt a little sad to not be able to do anything for them.

Our Explore and RTC programs have now given us an opportunity to work with some of these children once again. Many of high and higher secondary schools we now work with have as feeder schools, Asha supported primary and middle schools. We took the opportunity to talk to some of the students who have transitioned through multiple Asha programs to hear about their view of Asha. This gives us a perspective and understanding of how we impact the lives of these children.

“When I was in Class 9, the RTC teacher took permission from the HM and came to our class and introduced to us about the RTC. They told us that they would be opening a computer class. I always thought that I wanted to go to a computer class, I should not stop my learning. Suddenly, these teachers came to our class and told us about this. Then I thought I will attend these classes. When I saw the board outside which said ‘ASHA’, I was very happy to know that I will be learning under Asha again. Just like the Asha teachers at school, the RTC Miss also talks to us in a very caring manner.”

Bharkavi



Bharkavi K has been associated with Asha Chennai for several years. She is from Ramanjeri. Her father is a farmer and mother, a housewife. Barkavi studied at a private school until Class 1, but had to move to a nearby government school due to distance and financial constraints. She has been studying at PUMS Ramanjeri, which is an Asha supported school, since Class 2. In grades 2 to 3, she was exposed to computers by Asha teachers and learnt to handle computers. She loved how open and friendly the Asha teachers at school were. While other teachers spoke from a place of position, she felt that Asha teachers treated all the children like friends. In grades 4 and 5, she learnt OpenOffice and later learnt Blockly in Grade 6. Bharkavi fondly reminisces of having travelled with her classmates for school excursions organized by Asha. She has visited Mahabalipuram, Snake Park and the Birla Planetarium over the years.



Bharkavi (center) winning at Asha Impression, Grade 4



Bharkavi at the RTC, 2023

Due to Covid, she could not continue her computer classes in Grade 7 and 8. After Covid, she joined GHSS Kanagammachathiram in Grade 9. When she was informed about Asha's RTC at Kanagammachathiram, she joined the RTC to learn further computer courses. She has been coming to the RTC regularly for the last 2.5 years. She started her course from basic programming (Scratch), went on to learn Web Development, Physical Computing and now she is learning Animation at the KKC RTC. Her project was selected for Asha Impressions this year, and she had an opportunity to visit IIT Madras, an experience which she cherishes. She won the 2nd place for her project in Web development.

Currently, Barkavi is in Class 11 and is studying Computer Science and aims to join the software field when she begins work. In her free time, she likes to visit the fields and watch the farming process. She also enjoys drawing cartoons.

"I don't have the right words to say about Asha. When I go to the RTC, there is so much affection. Not only RTC teachers, even the Asha teachers at school, or the teachers who come as invigilators during our exams, they are not like teachers, they talk to us like close friends. We share our feelings, or have any doubts, we are able to freely share with them. We like Venkat Sir and Rajaram Sir a lot. They have been visiting us for years, and they remember us very well."

GOVARDHAN



Govardhan is from Ramanjeri in Thiruvallur. His father is no more, and his mother works as a tailor at a private company. Govardhan completed his primary education at a private school from 1-3 and then joined PUMS Ramanjeri in Class 4. Since this is an Asha supported school, he went on to learn basic literacy in Grade 4 and 5. During Grades 6 and 7, he learnt Blocky from the Asha teacher. During Covid, he was not able to practice computers for 1 year. After

Covid, he joined GHSS Kanagammachathiram in Grade 9. He learnt about the RTC run by Asha at Kanagammachathiram and started learning under the teacher at the center.

Govardhan is now studying Grade 11 in the Biology- Math group. This year he participated in the Kalai Thiruvizha, Digital Content Development competition organized by the Tamilnadu government. His project on Tanjavur's history, presented using Powerpoint, he won the 2nd place in the district level.



Govardhan (front center) at Asha excursion, 2017



Winning 1st place at RTC Impressions, IITM, 2023

At the RTC Impressions held at IIT Madras this year, Govardhan won the 1st place for his project on road safety. He used the Adafruit kit for physical computing to create his project. He has completed 3 courses at our RTC so far- Programming, Web development and physical computing. He is currently learning the coding and animation.

Govardhan wants to become a doctor or an engineer when he grows up. He is preparing for NEET and wants to prepare for JEE as well. He enjoys journaling and reading in his free time.

- "My project being selected, and going to IIT and presenting it, was like a dream that came true through the RTC. When we were returning from IIT, our teachers took us sightseeing. My friends were with me, so it was a jolly experience. None of us fear the RTC teachers because they are like friends to us. They are very caring. They sit with us and work on everything. They don't create

V A R S H A



M. Varsha has been a student with Asha Chennai from her primary to higher secondary. She is from Seethanjeri. Her father is a daily wage earner and mother, a housewife. Barkavi studied at PUPS Seethanjeri which is an Asha supported school. From grade 1 to 5, she has learnt

computers under the guidance of the Asha teachers. She was exposed to computers by Asha teachers and learnt to handle computers. In grades 4 and 5, she learnt Open Office after which she also worked on her Project. While learning with the Asha teachers, she recalls laughing a lot and having fun. The teachers were able to simplify the subjects and teach them. Other than computers, the teachers helped with clearing doubts in other subjects as well.

When she learnt about Asha's RTC program at Seethanjeri, she joined as she was very interested in computers. The RTC is very close to her school and she has been going there from the last 2 years. She worked on two projects, a quiz in the presentation format, and Snake and Ladder game using Scratch. Her project was selected for RTC Impressions in February 2023. The RTC Impressions was held at IIT Madras in February. This was the first time, she visited IIT and she was delighted that she had this wonderful opportunity. She won the 1st place in Digital Literacy.



Varsha at school, Grade 5



Varsha at the RTC Impression, Feb 2023

She started learning Digital Literacy and is now learning the Physical computing at the RTC. She is currently in Grade 9. Varsha wants to become a Collector once she grows up. Since no one else in her family had an opportunity to study as much as she has, she dreams of using her education as an opportunity to become the first Collector in her family. In her free time, Varsha loves reading, watch programs on TV and her phone.

“Earlier I did not know what a computer is. When I joined the government school, through Asha, I was taught about computers, which has been very useful. I have enjoyed it a lot. Since I learnt this, it has been very helpful in using other devices too. I like coding. When I used Scratch in the school, I got to know about coding.”

SIVANPRIYAN



Sivanpriyan is a Grade 10 student studying in GHS Thomur. His father works as a coolie and his mother works at a Petrol pump. From LKG to Grade 1, he studied at a private school and moved to government run PUMS Ramenjeri in Grade 2 due to financial constraints at home. This school is supported by Asha. While here, he learnt Digital Literacy and Scratch Programming. From Grade 9, he moved to GHS, Thomur. Over the years, he had enjoyed having the opportunity to use a computer, to create presentations and present them, Sivapriyan loves coding and wanted to learn more on how to code. He has now joined the Thomur RTC and is learning the Web development course where learnt how to create webpages using codes.

In 2023, Sivanpriyan was selected at a government competition named Ilakiyath Thiruvizha. This is a state wide cultural competition organized by the government of TamilNadu. He won the 1st prize in the essay competition for his essay on women empowerment. In his essay, he wrote about child marriage, female infanticide and gender equality. 250 students who won competitions across Tamilnadu were selected and invited to Chennai. Out of these, 25 students were selected to be taken on a tour to Singapore. Sivapriyan was delighted to learn that he was one among them. In September 2023, he went to Singapore for a week, where the group explored the city for 5 days.



Sivapriyan at a Science Exhibition visited by Rajaram and Venkat, 2017



Sivapriyan at the RTC, 2023

- "Even if we ask questions multiple times, the teachers explain things to us. They check with us if we have understood or not. If we don't, they are happy to explain until we understand. There is nothing that I do not like about the RTC. I like everything here. I am happy to learn typing and using the computer. I have met Rajaraman Sir many times and even taken photos with him. If I ask him a very long question, he gives me a very short answer. I like him very much."

JAYAPRIYA



Jaya Priya lives in Kannigaipair. Her mother has passed away and she lives with her father and grandmother. She attended the CSI Primary School until class 5. Currently, she is studying in Class 8 at GHSS Kannigaiper, which is supported by Asha. At school she learnt Open Office and Presentation. She has learnt to use the computers very well and now she has gotten used to them. She knows how to access Google, use her email ID and use it. She is proficient enough to help her other friends when it comes to Open office and presentation. She has had access to laptops at school and the RTC and now she is able to use them with confidence.

During Covid, she attended the Mini-school run by Asha as well. She attended the mini-school at our teacher Nadhiya's house in Kannigaiper. She was always keen to learn computers. The Asha teacher at the school informed her about the RTC at Kannigaiper. She has been attending the RTC since Grade 6. She has learnt Digital Literacy course at the RTC. She also volunteers to help her classmates to learn computers at school. She took up the Programming course at the RTC and submitted her project, Dora The Explorer using Scratch, for the RTC Impressions. Her project won the 3rd place at the RTC Impression held at IIT Madras this year.



Jayapriya (2nd from left) at the mini school, 2020



Jayapriya (far right) at RTC Impressions, IITM

Currently she is learning physical computing. She aims to become a Bank Manager one day. She enjoys learning computers, reading story books, and watching reels on the phone in her free time. She loves

dancing and would happily involve in dance and drama during school day events and during her time in the mini-school.

"I studied until class 5 in the private school and had to leave it mid-way. Since I could attend the mini school, now it is easier for me. Had I not attended the mini school, I would have missed out on a lot. Since I continued to study in those 2 years, I was able to adjust to the regular school when it started. I would have forgotten everything otherwise. At the mini-school I was able to learn a lot more and now, I am able to do better after regular school started."



PRISCILLA

Priscilla is from Kannigaiper. Her mother is a housewife and father works as a mechanic. She also has an older brother. Priscilla studied from Grade 1-5 in a private school. When Covid hit in 2020, she was in Class 5. The school started online classes but, she did not have the means to attend it. She had to eventually withdraw from the private school as they could not afford the fees. Her parents came to know about the Asha mini-school being run by Nadhiya near their house and enrolled her in it. The mini-school had a mixed age group. Since, there was no focus on a particular curriculum, the teachers taught using activities and games. Children were taught English, Math, Science experiments, rhymes on computer, games on GCompris and active games. She enjoyed learning through computers, doing experiments, and was very active in completing all activities taught. Her mother made sure that Priskilla never missed a day in the mini-school.



Priskilla (center) at the mini-school, 2020



Winning 3rd place at RTC Impressions, 2023

After lockdown was lifted, she joined HSS Kannigaiper and is now is Grade 8. When she was at the school, the teacher informed her that the Asha team as started a free computer class at a centre. The children at the school were encouraged to join the RTC. Priscilla joined the RTC in Grade 6. She did her Digital Literacy course and went on to learn Programming. She enjoys coding the most. Her project, Dora the Explorer, won the 3rd place in programming at the RTC Impressions held at IIT Madras in 2023.

She is presently learning the physical computing course at the Kannigaiper RTC. She wants to become a Collector and enjoys reading, journaling, and art and crafts. She loves to read books on facts.
