



Empowerment in Slums and labour colonies

This summer I did an internship with an NGO that was extending a helping hand to marginalized groups and was working on improving their living condition. After some research, I learned about Sampark and soon enough I landed in their office in Jakssandra. They gave me an in-depth overview of their work. After my orientation, my one and half month journey with this lovely organization began.

I helped in making a map of Sampark's creches and workers resource centers (WRCs) all over Karnataka. I also helped in some paper work for accounts team and the next week I went on my first field visit!

Off I went to visit a creche and having not visited a labor colony the experience was a little new for me but soon I understood the working of the creche(day care centre for children of construction workers). I interacted with teachers there and I arrived during lunch time so after a small prayer the children began to eat the kichiddi and the eggs that had been provided. It was heartwarming to see that the kids were remembering god in such absolute poverty. After the meal was over I interacted with the teachers who were really nice to me and very quite eager to show me around. I saw a nutrition chart, a vaccination chart, and a class timetable. I began working on the map and this was a challenge for me. But I found this really good tool called Google Earth and this was particularly useful and I created a map for both Sampark's creches and their WRC's. In my second field trip, I even played a game of ball with the children and had fun with them. This particular creche had a water treatment plant and clean toilets as well something I had not seen in the Doddakannelli creche.

I wanted to visit a worker's resource center and I visited the Bankshari WRC and went to Soladevanahalli labor colony. Sampark WRC team member was talking to workers about the importance of getting labor cards and how it makes them more independent and have more potential to grow. This was a great learning experience for me and probably the field visit that I enjoyed the most.

I learned a lot through this internship and above all it taught me how to be grateful for what we have in life and I feel this will help me grow as a person in the long run. I got such excellent mentors and everyone at the office who made me feel welcome. I am going to be back next summer and am looking forward to the challenges and field visits waiting for me!

– Saumitra Singh