

Chembakolli – a village in India

School

Aims:

- To explore school life at the Adivasi (tribal) school in Gudalur
- To compare and contrast school life in Gudalur with school life in the UK



Vidyodaya school – Gudalur

Chembakolli is one of many Adivasi (tribal) villages in the forest around the Nilgiri Hills, south India. It is in the state of Tamil Nadu. Children from Chembakolli and other Adivasi villages in the region go to Vidyodaya school in the town of Gudular. Vidyodaya is a primary school that takes children up to 14 years old. It means 'awakening of knowledge' and was set up in 1995 to ensure Adivasi children from the surrounding area receive a good quality education which includes learning about Adivasi history and culture.

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Assembly

Each school day starts with assembly in the prayer hall. The children sing Adivasi songs, English songs and songs from other parts of India. Sometimes they act out dramas, dance and play instruments. On Tuesdays they tell each other riddles and Thursday's assembly is for exercises and stretching (or yoga).

Questions: What do you think the children are doing in this photograph? (singing a song with actions) How is this assembly the same or different to assemblies in your school?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Morning lessons

The children have lots of different lessons and are taught in two languages: English and Tamil. In the mornings they have lessons in Tamil, English, maths, science and social studies.

Questions: Which subject do you think is being taught in this lesson (maths)?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Morning lessons - Maths



Morning lessons - Science

Questions: Which subject do you think is being taught here? What do you think the children are learning about? Can you work out what is happening in this experiment?

In this Science lesson the children are making a basic thermometer to learn about how the air in the bottle expands as it heats up. The more the air expands the more it pushes down on the water surface so the water is pushed up the straw. The position of the water in the straw shows the degree of heating.

Question: Have you done experiments that show different temperatures?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Morning lessons - Information technology

There is one computer in the school and the students enjoy using it in their lessons. They work on it in pairs or small groups.

Questions: How many computers are there in your school? How often do you use the computers? What do you think are the advantages of working together?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



The library

There is a library in the school where the children can come to read books in Tamil and English. They can also borrow books to read at home.

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Lunchtime

Children bring packed lunches to school in a steel lunch box called a tiffin box. They eat with their hands and often sit on the floor. They eat rice and dhal (lentils).

Click 1: some children choose to eat outside

Click 2: others choose to eat inside

Questions: Where do you have lunch and what do you like to eat?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Playtime

After lunch the children have playtime. Lunchtime (including playtime) lasts for 1 hour.

Questions: What do you think it would be like to play in this playground? Which games would you play here?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Afternoon lessons - Review session

There are more lessons after lunchtime. Lessons begin with a half hour review session where children work together to go over the things that they have learnt that morning.

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



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Afternoon lessons - Art and crafts

In the afternoon the children learn crafts like beadwork, macrame (string knotting), embroidery and painting.

Question: Would you like to go to this school?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Afternoon lessons – Games

The children also have a games session each afternoon. They play many different games like *kho kho*, *kabbadi*, dodgeball, football and skipping.

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Duty

The students take responsibility for keeping the school tidy. At the end of the day they sweep the classrooms, tidy up shelves and fold up the mats.

Questions: Do you have a similar system in your school, e.g. classroom monitors? Which jobs do you do to keep your school tidy?

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID



Hometime

The students from the village of Chembakolli go home by jeep or bus. Those living in Kotharvayal , a village on the outskirts of Gudalur, walk.

Photograph: ACCORD/AMS/ACTIONAID