

# Thulir

## Newsletter – June 04

### **Greetings from Sittilingi.**

The month of May had unusually heavy rains this year . We had several weeks of rainy weather and it brought down the temperature considerably. The water level in the wells rose up to reach the brim in most places. Last year, in May, the mercury had hit 43 degrees Celsius! The cooler weather and increased water levels were welcome ;but the rain wasn't very good news for the farmers who had planted cotton and tomatoes as they suffered losses.

We had reported about the good initial response to the evening classes at Thulir. The numbers came down considerably in May coinciding with the onset of the rains. Most days the rains would be at the heaviest in the evenings and this was also a reason for absence. May was also the month of summer holidays in the schools and many families went visiting relatives. Due to the wild fluctuations in the numbers as well as the irregularity in attendance, we couldn't make much headway in carrying the classes forward.

May was also the month when our house construction came to an end and we began the shifting into the new house. This too took up a considerable amount of our time. We finally started staying in our new house from June 9th and immediately, we could feel the advantages of being in close proximity to Thulir. We are more approachable to the children now.... currently a student appearing for re-examination in class 10, is using Thulir three times a day and we are able to coach him. After a year of living in a guest room, having our own space and unpacking our things feels good. Our sons are especially feeling happier and more settled.

The children who originally signed up for the classes are back now and we are back to full strength. The academic levels of the children from the government schools are shockingly low. Even the older children - 13 to 15 yrs. old - do not know the meanings of simple words in English. They read and memorise Tamil but we were surprised to see that their comprehension in Tamil too was very poor. Math skills are also almost non-existent. The younger children, below 10 years old, of course - do not even know how to read. But the love to know and learn is there. We have a tough task ahead .

We have got some more books and learning materials donated by well-wishers and so Thulir is getting better equipped. We are yet to classify and arrange the new material!

Anu and Krishna