

3.3.9 Case Study: India Photos

For the Research Report, we agreed to select a small number of images and to add comments. To do this I selected some of the images that the children often went back to look at and those talked most about. Where I could, I added some of the children's comments, from the conversations they had with me and from the individual interviews that Shoba did with each child, and (in italics) some words of explanation from me and from Shoba were this helps to understand the picture.

It was not easy to make the selections as part of the impact of the project comes from the accumulation and sequencing of the photos. Selecting a small number and giving them a starring role shifts and changes their meaning a little. It gives them greater significance (and perhaps greater meaning) but also isolates them from their context and the flow of events.



Mother said we should start with Lord Ganesha (the middle picture on the wall behind) because this God is always the place to begin something new.

My mother has taught me to pray to Lord Ganesha every day at least twice. After the bath in the morning and before going to bed in the night. I feel that Lord Ganesha will help me the whole day to be out of difficulties.

All such manners are taught me by my mother, so I am very happy & also feel good when I pray to the God every time.

a child's comment



This is the kitchen where Mother teaches us cleanliness and cooking, so it is a good place. I am very happy with my mother, who takes care of us so much, our health and everything else. I am very happy to be placed in SOS with this mother. My sister (who is studying sociology at College) is also in this picture.

a girl's comment



This is the place where we always pray and also where we put prizes. We pray there so we love it a lot. This place makes me remember the family's achievements and I always feel I should try to achieve more so that mother will not have any place to keep all the prizes!

Whenever I face any difficulties I stand here and pray to Jesus to make my sorrows happy. My mother had told me to pray to Jesus about problems which is true. That is why I feel very good about this picture.

Children's comments



This is in mother's room and it is the mantap of God and also who I pray to every day. I love praying and feel it is a good start of the day to pray and because it helps me avoid problems. I love it because I like the way my mother keeps the mantap so beautifully.

a child's comment

Shobha explains that the mantap is the house for a God. This one is for Lord Shiva. It is always made of wood and if you are rich it will be made of teak.

researcher's comment



Prayer is because God is the one whom we pray a lot to. Everyday we pray in the Village and in school but I enjoy it most when we pray with Mother because it feels good.

a child's comment



Homework in the family house

researcher's comment



Fun Park: The Breakdance

I was scared because when it started I thought we would fall off the edge. I feel like crying because I am scared but instead of crying I am laughing, then I am crying, then I am laughing again. When it finished I was happy but I did not go on the second time.

The games were all different. Some made you scared and some made you happy. I enjoyed them all but I think I liked the Breakdance best.

I felt a little scared but I was enjoying it the second time. I enjoyed feeling scared and enjoying it but I was waiting for it to stop.

The first time everyone was scared. I told everyone to come but the first time they didn't enjoy it. Since Shobha told them they went the second time and this time it made me enjoy it a lot. Shobha was telling my friend not to get scared also Shobha was very brave in it so we would not be scared. This is why I love this picture.

The first time it was very scary. The second time I tried it I enjoyed it and liked it a lot.

children's comments



I felt it was fast and I didn't go but I tried it once and it was slow and I felt happy.

a child's comment



On the Parachute you can see everything so I enjoyed that a lot.

I like it a lot because up there everything is visible.

The Parachute was good because you could see everything.

children's comments



The Bike is very good. It felt fast but I enjoyed it.

a child's comment



Boating is very good. This is the second time I have been. The first time I went in a boat it was scary because it moved when you stepped on it, but then I was happy. Everything was good since I like water a lot.

This is the first time we went boating and everyone liked it a lot. I felt very happy. Also I enjoyed playing in the water, which is something that I had not experienced before.

This is the first time I went boating so I was happy and playing well.

children's comments



It is always good to come back to the Village because it is such a calm and peaceful place and your mother is there.

a child's comment

Many people, children and adults, commented on how green the Village is (especially compared to the busy road outside which is noisy and dusty). Many of the trees have name labels and the grass and shrubs are kept trimmed.

researcher's comment



The bedrooms were named by many children as places in the house where they felt safe.

researcher's comment



Life in the Village is intensely social. The children make close friends, look after one another and take care especially of the younger children, who are a constant source of attention.

researcher's comment



Priti's dog

This photo became a reference point for the group. The dog was seen in the Park and Priti took the photo as it ran across a piece of neglected ground on the other side of a fence. The dog came to represent something of a free spirit, though generally stray dogs frighten the children (rightly, as they often carry rabies).

This and the next picture were two of the few pictures that were associated with the photographer. In both cases, though the images are very different, they are expressive and say something about the point of view and character of the girl who took each photo.

researcher's comment



Kala's Rainbow

This picture too became a point of interest and discussion. It was taken opportunistically by Kala against advice from adults that it would not work! It came to represent both the ephemeral beauty of the rainbow itself and the fact that Kala seized the moment and caught the image meant that it was referred to later as 'Kala's Rainbow'; it became 'her' picture.

researcher's comment



The Village is a feminised environment. It is only in the Youth House that you encounter adolescent male culture.

researcher's comment



Towards the end of the week the children spent more time looking at the pictures. They liked especially to look at them on the laptop.

researcher's comment



Priti was down by the lake taking pictures of the ducks with the others. As she walked up the hill to the Village, she stopped, turned the camera around and took this self-portrait. Usually someone bursting with energy and constantly racing around, this picture caught her at a reflective moment. This was in the last day of using the cameras and at same time as some of the girls started reflecting more deeply on the images.

researcher's comment



Kala, on the last day as we returned to the Village in the bus after visiting local temples. This picture too marks the reflective turn as the children began to spend more time looking at the pictures and to look back at the camera in a less conventional, less stylised and more reflective way, rather than adopting the standard poses that are normally expected by adults.

researcher's comment