

Basic information

Date of the site visit: Two virtual site visits were made

1. April 5, 2021
2. August 9, 2021

Name of the Project: *Lok Biradri Prakalp*

Name of the Organization Running the Project (if different): *Maharogi Sewa Samiti*

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned both times

	Project Contact's Information	Site Visitor's (Your) Information (Volunteer conducting the visit)
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PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment (cross-validation of information presented in proposal)

1. What is the main ideology of the organization behind the project?

Education and upliftment of marginalized tribal community

2. How old is the organization?

1973

3. How and why was it founded?

The Madia and Gond tribes were not only cut off from the civilization, but even from the forms of basic rural existence. As a result, they were malnourished, faced high mortality rates and were completely ignorant of life beyond the jungles. After independence, their list of problems only increased because of large-scale exploitation by forest officials, traders and merchants who rampaged the forests for their own benefit. This condition of theirs prompted Dr. Prakash Baba Amte to setup a school.

Lok Biradari volunteers embarked on door-to-door campaigns to persuade parents and make them aware of the various benefits of a good education. The school finally started under a tree, with 25 students on the first day.

4. What are the different focus areas of the organization? (give a rough estimate of the % of their total effort/funding)

- Community development 10 %
- Education 40 %
- Health 50 %
- Other _____ % (please specify) _____

5. What is the administrative structure of the group (e.g. Board of Directors/Grassroots-based/Volunteer based)?

A mix of everything, permanent employees and volunteers with 2 year assignments. The school has a director, and the organization has a Board of Trustees who meet regularly for major decisions.

6. Are there any other organizations working in the area providing any one or all of the services provided by the visited organization? (Briefly mention their names and their objectives)

Organization(s)	Objectives of the organization(s)
4 to 5 NGOs working in the regions	Few small NGOs from Nagpur providing stationary to

<p><i>Tata trust</i></p> <p><i>Kevalya foundation (stopped 3 yrs back)</i></p> <p>=</p> <p>They wish to have more NGO players</p>	<p>schools of zila parishad – they cannot do it for all the schools</p> <p><i>working towards deaddiction education;</i></p>
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7. Is the organization/founder involved with any other social issues/causes/projects other than running the project proposed?

Yes, they are running a hospital since 1973 and a wild animal orphanage. They also organize various medical camps in and around Hemalkasa.

8. When was the project of interest started?

The hospital was started in 1973, and the school in 1976.

9. What is their vision about the future of the project?

They want to develop rational individuals capable of making informed choice, for every student in the school.

10. What were the initial challenges faced by the organization and by the founder when starting the project? How did he/she overcome them? Who helped them through the initial stages?

First challenge was to convince the tribal people about the importance of education - this was overcome with the help of volunteers.

The next challenge was the tribal dialect, Maria, and the fact that they had to redesign the whole curriculum in this language. This is still a limitation as all teachers need to learn it in order to teach the kids.

Finally the infrastructure was a challenge - first lessons were taking place under a tree.

The tobacco addiction is huge challenge. Tobacco is easily available to kids from a very young age. As the locals grow them in their yards.

11. Has the organization ever approached the government for funding? If so, what was the outcome? If not, why not?

Yes, the total strength of the school is ~ 604. Govt. of India funds 480 children (40 children/class there are 12 classes). ASHA funds 100 children. The rest (20) are day scholars and do not stay in the hostel. Most of the teachers in the school are Govt.

employees. Only main subject teachers are paid by Govt. Arts, library teachers and psychologist are paid by ASHA. 15 out of the 25 teachers are paid by the government.

12. Currently, what are the main problems the organization faces for running this project?

COVID has created problem for covering the syllabus and kept the students away from school. Between June to December the teachers were running centers by going to each village and teaching the children there from 1-8th grade. Each teacher had to be trained in all the subjects for all the classes. The classes ran about 3-4 hours everyday, They kept in constant touch with them, providing them with homeworks, worksheets etc. As the families don't have access to internet or cell phones.

In January, when the school reopened, most of the students came back after the lockdown except one girl who was married in the meantime, but she is also coming back to give her 12th board exams. They have a constant fear that girls are being exposed to household work and instability.

With the second wave all the students except those in class 10 and 12 had to be sent back again. Given COVID has reached the villages and affected the local population, they are trying to find solutions to continue student education, as running the centers by sending the teachers to the schools is no more a safe option.

13. How many centers/schools does the project run? How many of those were you able to visit?

3.

14. Were you able to choose the project centers to visit? Or were all centers visited suggested by the project partner?

Not applicable.

PART B: The beneficiaries and the community

(Information to be gathered from parents and children)

1. Approximately how many families live in the area?

Approximately 6-7000 families in the Bhamragarh taluk.

2. What do the parents do for a living? (Agricultural worker, Daily wage laborer etc.)

They usually do farming and fishing. The main diet is rice, fish and vegetables. They are many rivers nearby for fishing and they grow vegetables in their gardens.

3. What is the religious/economic/educational background of the parents/community? (Are the parents able to pay any fees? Are the parents literate? etc.)

Most parents are illiterate and the students are the first generation to go to school. Only 40% of the students come from partially/ slightly educated background. The

rest of the children are first generations to come to school. The ones being admitted into first standard now are more likely to come from a literate household..

4. Does the project/school target specific families (e.g. agricultural workers, families with specific backgrounds, illiterate parents, first generation learners, orphans, sex workers, etc.)

The admission criteria prioritizes families farther away from Hemalkasa, who live deeper in the forest. Especially the areas that are cut off from the areas, more remote areas. They try to go farther with each years admissions. Admissions are made on 1st of May each year. They ensure that the students admitted are from needy households. The ones that have limited economic means. Preference is given to orphans, single parent children or disabled children

5. How often do the teachers meet the parents?

There is a parents meeting on Wednesdays, where by rotation some parents are participating. The purpose is to consult them in decision making. But this has been difficult due to COVID and the parents were advised not to visit the centers this year.

6. How do the parents/the community view the efforts taken by the organization that runs the project?

The project is very well seen in the region. They do not know of any other kind of schools, so they are satisfied, but the school tries to show them other school examples through videos so that they can make an informed choice. . There is usually a huge line for admissions. For 45 students to be admitted, 300 applications are made. The students that do not get selected unfortunately go to the district schools that do not have any facilities, and are in bad condition.

7. What is the motivation for the parents to send their children to school?

Providing better lifestyle and future for there children. Some of the students have procured Govt. jobs and seen a better life so that provides motivation. One of the students just passed his UPSC exams. After 12th there are a lot of scholarships available for certain specific courses through the state's tribal dept. Around 50-60% children come back and improve the farming methods and techniques.

8. How do the parents participate in the organization's activities? (e.g. by contributing their time, money or labor in the school's activities etc.)

The vegetables are bought from the parents yard. The parents more volunteer in other schools, not the one supported by ASHA.

9. Has the community supported the project (e.g. financially, donating land, volunteering, etc.)?

They provide lands for schools, health centers. The relation between the organization and the community is good, they always provide support in building etc.

10. Are there any Government Schools in the area? (Circle one)

- Yes
- No

11. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community?

12. Why did the parents choose this school over the Government School?
Because they are better in quality.

13. When you visited, how many children were present in the class?
Not applicable.

14. What is the average age group of the children per class? How are they handling older children that need basic education?

45 in 1st standard. About 50 students per class. Most children are enrolled from 1st class, very rarely they accept students in later classes. Higher classes have more children.

15. What is the regular class strength? What is the boy-girl ratio in the school?
It's almost half-half, as they select them like this. The number of boys increases slightly towards 11th and 12th grades.

16. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school? (Site visit volunteers observation)
Yes, quite a lot. They were very sad when they had to go back. They have a lot of freedom, they feel at home within the school premises.

17. What portion of children from the local community (approx.) attends this school?
What portion of children does not go to ANY school? Where do other children in the community go to school?
The children not going to LBP, go to the government schools, but the quality and teachers' attendance is really poor.

18. What activities do the children do after school hours?

They can access the computer lab if they want to use the Internet, they play, clean their dorms, sing or do sports. They are playgrounds and courtyards. In the evening prayers they sing their own Marathi songs and Marathi songs. After dinner they all

study 1.5 – 2 hours. Before school they have yoga sessions or exercise sessions early in the mornings.

19. What is the main motivation for the students to attend school?

Atmosphere at school, presence of other students, opportunity to do and learn interesting things, access to healthcare (as the hospital is at the same location) and superior nutrition.

20. What is the drop-out rate among students? Why do they leave the school? (If high, what is the organization doing regarding this?)

It is very low; the demand is much higher than the number of students they can accept.

21. What do the children feel about the school? Do they feel happy to come to school every day? (Question posed to the children to gauge their replies)

Not applicable.

PART C: Details about the project and its staff

(Information to be gathered from students and staff)

1. How far is the project site from the main town/village? How do the children commute? (foot, bus, etc.)

It is 2 km from Bhamragarh tehsil. The students stay on campus.

2. Are the children charged fees for attending school? (Either school or bus, etc.)

No.

3. What infrastructure and facilities are available at the project site you visited? (eg. Furniture, buildings, toilets, library, sports, hostels, mid-day meals etc)

Residential dorms (boys and girls separated), canteen with 3 meals per day + 1 afternoon snack, sports field, library, computer room (40 computers, projector screen, internet connection that students use for their projects and assignments).

4. Is the building permanent or temporary construction? Is it owned or rented? What is its physical condition? How are they being maintained at the condition?

Not applicable.

5. How big are the classrooms? How many children per room? How many classes (1st to 3rd etc) per room?

Classrooms have normal size, 50 students in each class from 1st to 12th.

6. What is the medium of instruction? Is this the student's mother tongue?

Blackboard teaching, but also several innovative techniques are attempted; teaching language is Marathi, but teachers can speak also the Maria local dialect./language.

The small classes have a small blackboard which they can re-use every day.

7. What is the mode of teaching in the school? (Check the appropriate choices)

- Formal (State Board, Central Board etc) upto _____ 12th _____ grade (LKG, 5th etc)
- Non-Formal Education (NFE), do the students also attend formal school? No
- Vocational - *they have also some focus on vocational learning, but incorporated in*
- Other. Please specify _____

8. If **Non-Formal Education**, how many of the children also attend formal schools in the area? If **none**, does the project plan this for the future- either by setting up formal schools or by setting up a process to send children to mainstream schools?
Not applicable.

9. If **Non-Formal Education**, does the organization create its own study material (books, games)? Or does it use NCERT/NIOS books?

Not applicable

10. If **Vocational**, what do the children do after they finish training?

Vocational training is part of the curriculum.

11. What are the daily school hours? How many days of the week/month/year is the school open?

About 6h/day, with breaks, on Mon-Fri and half-day on Sat. With the centers it was from 3-4 h/day.

12. How many staff or volunteers are involved in the project? (Full-time/Part-time/Volunteers) What are their roles? Give breakdown by roll (eg. 2 full-time teachers, 1 full-time volunteer teacher, 1 cook, 1 administrator, etc.)

Around 200 volunteers (paid) for the entire project (school, hospital and animal shelter). Out of these 10 are teachers.

13. How many of them are from the local community?

Most of them are from the community, but not the teachers.

14. How many of the staff are women? What are their roles?

Within the teachers, only 5 out 25 are women. Among other roles women are taking care of the kitchen, canteen, bookshop, library and other support roles. There is a very little tendency to have women in the standard feminine roles, but this might often be because of preference, as gender equality of opportunities is highly encouraged.

15. What is the education level/teaching experience of the teachers? What is their background?

Most of them are well educated and have a background in the domain they teach. During COVID, though they had to teach all the subjects for all the classes.

16. What is the motivation for the teachers to work in this project (eg. pay, service, etc.)? What are the other employment opportunities that they have in the town/village?

Service to the community, the founder of the project is well known and inspires many volunteers to come to LBP.

17. How long have they been with this project/organization?

It varies a lot.

18. How many teachers have left the school in the past one year, and why?

One

19. How many new teachers have joined in the past year?

One.

20. Does the organization train the teachers? (Circle one)

• Yes

No

21. If yes, how do they provide the training?

Through different training programs, online trainings, collaborations. They also have study tours. Recent training: introduction of Montessori methods.

22. Where do they live, and how much they travel to work here?

They live on campus, accomodation for the staff working at LBP is offered.

23. How much is the staff paid? Are they happy with their salaries?

The volunteering teachers are paid 13k rupees/month, the government paid teachers are paid 30-50k rupees/month. The govt. teachers are happy, the volunteers are not necessarily unhappy but the difference is quite significant.

The staff/workers are paid about 200 rupees/day.

24. How often do the main founders/organizers/volunteers visit the center? Do they do only administrative duties or spend time at the grassroots as well?

They live there.

25. What does the organization say about education of the child after they leave its school?

Most students finish up to 12th grade. Some of them continue their education because there are some admission advantages for the students coming from tribal regions.

26. Were you able to look at actual work of the students? Homework/classwork/tests, etc? Comment.

Not applicable.

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit)

1. What are the different sources of funding for this project? (different agencies/Govt)

Some teachers are paid by government, otherwise donations. The govt pays about Rs1500 per student per month which is bare minimum.

2. What is the annual budget?

It is not known because it is managed together with the hospital, engineering initiatives and the wild animals shelter.

3. Are detailed records of past funding and spending available? If possible, please request a copy (of annual financial statements, for example).
4. What is the largest portion of their expenses (salaries/infrastructure/etc.)?
Accommodation and food expenses.
5. Do the salaries listed on their account books match the salaries that the teachers communicated to you?
Not applicable.
6. Do the expenses in the proposal reflect the quality/quantity of material found at the site? (ex. Do the students have uniforms if they have been itemized? Do they have the number of computers they claim to have? Does the food seem nutritious? Are there enough books? etc.)
Not applicable.

PART E: Comments

Site visit two was carried out as the students had returned home following the Govt. COVID guidelines.

The principal Samiksha Godse, the principal of the school was the contact person. She showed me the office, the classes that were running – 10th and the 12th standard. Other classes will slowly begin depending on the easing of the restrictions.

I interacted with a few students during their classes. The older ones were mostly shy. They spoke Marathi, the medium of instruction at school.

The school was also celebrating “Adivasi diwas”, indigenous people day. Some of them were writing essays and some were making posters and drawings for the competition held on this occasion at school.

The principal also sent videos of students playing on the grounds and in the library. They are also attached online.

There were also 5-6 students from the other school in Nalgonda, preparing for their entrance exams to Navodaya Vidyalaya.

These young children were more enthusiastic and open, when questions were asked. They spoke English and answered all the questions.

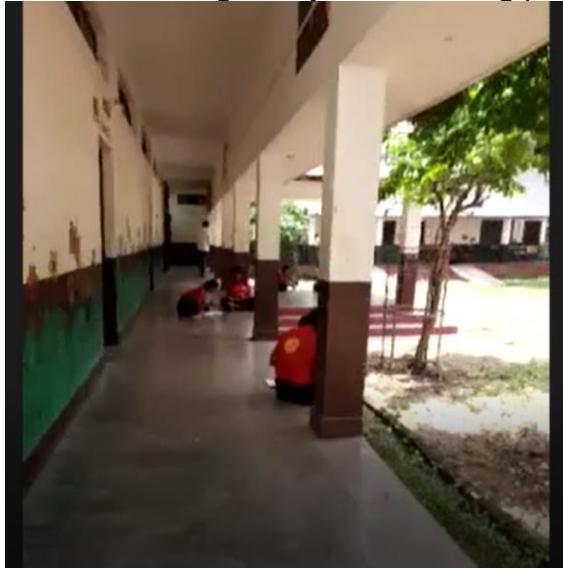
Here are some screenshots from the event.

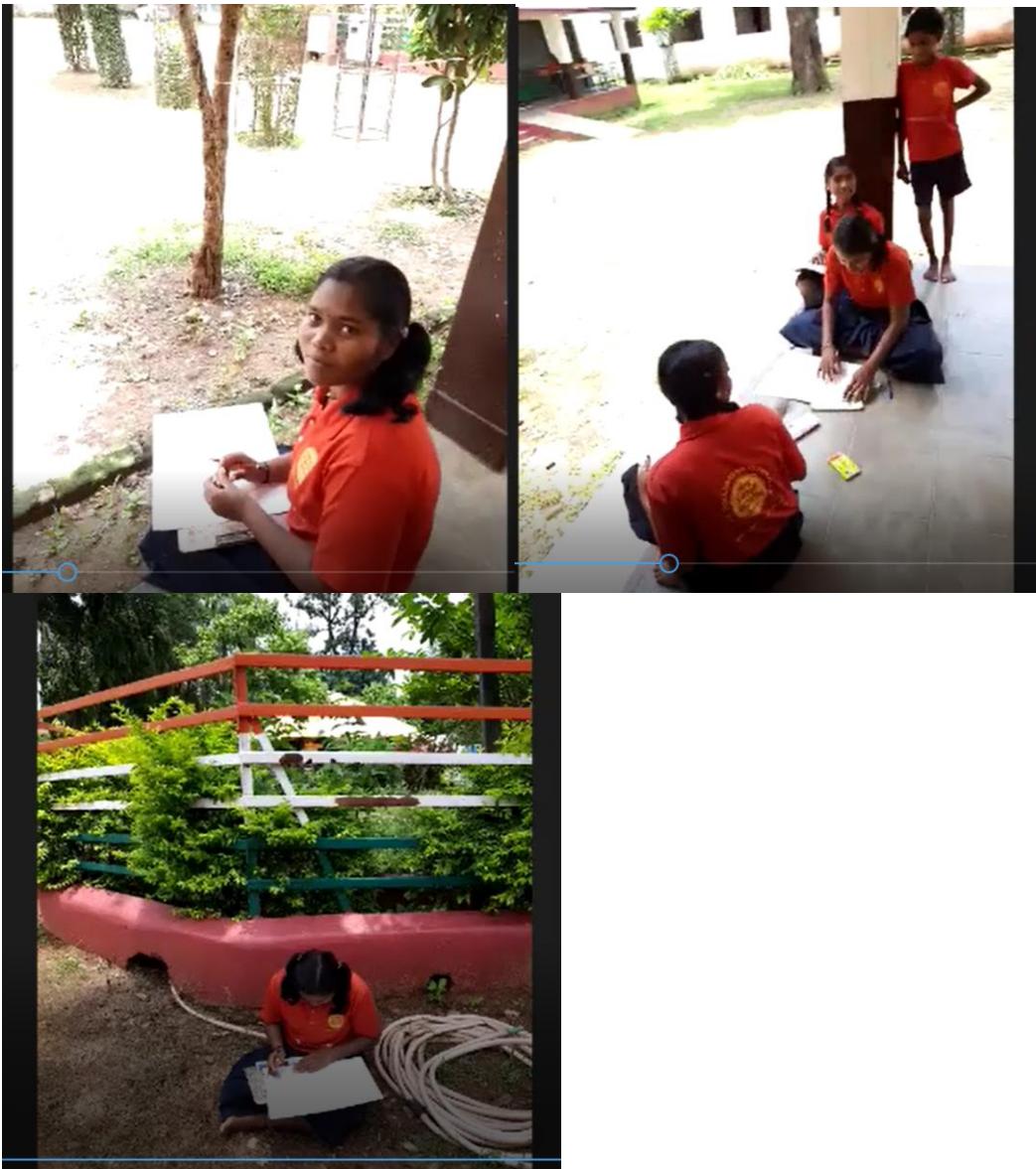
Class 10



zoom_0

Students writing essays and making posters for the Adivasi diwas





Class 12

