

## Site visit by Rohini Muthuswami

I visited Tihar Jail today with Roohi, who has been working on this project for the past 4-5 years. They started the project by working with the welfare officer from whom they got list of 300 families whose one member was inside the jail. The foundation began to provide them with ration and a year later the welfare officer called them in for a discussion. As offshoot of this discussion, they began working in Jail #2 and started faith healing. The inmates started trusting them because they took care of their families. As the faith healing progressed, they started telling them about their problems. The volunteers would track down the families and provide help (ration, paying rent, education assistance). For the past two years they have been conducting inter jail quiz. They have done some amount skill building but the primary focus is faith healing. Further, as jail # 2 has convicts and the age range of the inmates is from 30-70 years, skill building is not of primary importance in this jail. They are going to begin this work with teen offenders who are housed in Jail # 7. They have already a talent show with them and the jail authorities are keen that the foundation should work them.

As this is not really non-formal education kind of work, I have formed impression based purely on the interactions between the convicts and the volunteer. I also talked with Mr. Pandey who used to be the superintendent of jail #2. Currently, he is the superintendent of jail #4 and I understand that Roohi and others are going to begin working with these inmates too.

Roohi said that there are 3-4 volunteers. They all have a job and they do this purely on voluntary basis. Roohi volunteers on Thursdays and others do it on Wednesday. During the conversations it was clear that the volunteers were very regular and that the inmates as well as the officials were consulting them for faith healing. The relationship between Mr. Pandey and Roohi is very cordial. All the guards know Roohi so I believe that the organization is doing genuine work.

This project is somewhat different from what we normally fund. I think it might be worthwhile for us to work with the teens at Tihar Jail. If we can provide skill building as well as reformation, it would be great. However, I am not still clear about what Roohi plans to do with the teens. As far as I understand, the project is in its infancy and needs funds before taking a concrete shape.

I also asked about the source of funds for the foundation. I understand that the ration they distribute is donated either in the form of food or money. They give ration to needy people at most for 1-2 years and they expect that the recipient should find job, which is a good thing. The foundation has many other projects and some have funding. For example Smiley is supporting a project in Delhi but I do not know any thing about this organization.

Roohi is very passionate about the project (which is a good thing) as is the superintendent of jail #4. In sum, I would say we should go ahead with it at least for 1 year and see progress before deciding the next step.