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**Site Visit to ASHRAY AKRUTI – EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER, Hyderabad, India,
December 16, 2024**

A Voluntary Organization Working for the hearing impaired since 1996

Website: www.ashrayakruti.org

I visited the “Early Intervention Center” at Ashray Akruti on Monday, December 16, 2024. The “Early Intervention Center” at Ashray Akruti has three locations.

- 1) Srinagar Colony, (Ameerpet, Telangana)
- 2) Chandrayangutta, (Telangana)
- 3) Kadapa, (Andhra Pradesh)

I visited the “Early Intervention Center” located in Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad. This center has grown since my last visit (in November 2023) and has 120 children in their Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) program and 40 children in Early Intervention group classes. The enrollment is expected to rise further due to the high demand, because of the positive outcomes & success rate – this will translate into more resources/funding that will be needed in order to continue providing quality services – this point was stressed by Kalpana, the Head of the Early Intervention Center. All children/students are hearing impaired with varying levels of disability. The goal of these Early Intervention Centers is to help the children at an earlier age when the outcomes are superior and the cost per child is significantly less. Furthermore, these children go on to regular schools and are mainstreamed at a much earlier age. This is the only such center in Telangana.



The early intervention center/school building at Srinagar Colony is clean and properly maintained. The classrooms are well organized. On a Monday morning (December 16, 2024) I met with Kalpana, the Head of the center/school. I discussed their AVT program and their group classes. After a cochlear implant the children attend the Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) from where they attend group classes & can be easily mainstreamed. The progress for each child is tracked individually. The AVT program has 120 children. I watched 2 group classes in progress. One of the classrooms had six 6 year olds & the other had 5 year olds. All children, except one, had cochlear implant. The children were active and engaged freely in the classroom discussion.

Learning at an early age as at the Early Intervention Center, occurs via hearing and speech as opposed to lip reading and sign language when there is no early intervention. This method of learning results in much better outcomes and quality of life for the child and family. It is also more economical: Happy and healthy children and a greater return on the investment. Since the program has grown, space is at a premium and they expressed need for additional funding in order to grow the program and add space. Most of the work at the Early Intervention Center is funded by ASHA for Education.

They will need sponsors/donors in order to keep the programs going since the children are from very poor families. I also visited Ashray Akruti's multimedia center and spoke with Mr. Babu, the Director. At the multimedia center they design and create content for school curriculum, mostly in STEM programs. They have a group of subject matter experts who research and create relevant content.

Mr. Babu also indicated that they are looking forward to addressing additional disabilities such as autism, learning disabilities etc. in order to help a broader spectrum/more under privileged children. They also plan to reach out to students in other states.

It was a very rewarding experience to see a place where children & women can hope and build a better life. The center is very appreciative of the support provided by Asha for Education, Danbury Chapter. To that end, I spoke with 2 mothers, at the early intervention center, who expressed their gratitude and described how their child had benefited from this early intervention.

Below are some photographs taken during my visit:

Group Classes at the Early Intervention Center





Speaking with Mothers at the Early Intervention Center



With Mothers at the Early Intervention Center



With Kalpana Head of the Early Intervention Center



On December 3, 2024 I had the opportunity to attend an event held by “Ashray Akruti” to mark the “International Day of People with Disabilities”. At this event they recognized their corporate partners who help with their multimedia platforms, digital skill learning platforms etc. It was impressive to note the strides made by Ashray Akruti in trying to mainstream students with disabilities, starting with the Early Intervention Center. The chief guest at this event was Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary for Information Technology, Electronics and Communications and Industries & Commerce Departments of Government of Telangana.