

Site visit by Gershon Gurin-Podlish, Asha Boston

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Each October I visit India, meeting with Pari and experiencing the four libraries in the Thulasi project area. I use the word 'experiencing' because, for me, it is always a thrill and a delight to meet with the teachers, the children and to observe the activities of the libraries.

In each of the four libraries I have seen the results of offering children an opportunity that they would not otherwise experience without the aid of Asha Chennai and Asha Boston. Whether it is the librarian reading stories, children sitting quietly alone reading a book, children sharing a book with friends, 'browsing', yes browsing, through the shelved books, participating in science experiments or simply enjoying putting a colorful puzzle together, my reaction is the same; one of happiness and joy that I share with the librarian and the children.

A library is something that children in the United States take for granted. But for a child in an Indian village, having a library is a gift with which they can explore the world that exists outside of their village; to share their world with new friends that they find in the pages of the books that are in their library.

All of this...all of it...has come about with the help and support of Asha. A child, living in one of the four villages mentioned, may not always be able to find Boston on a world map, but that child knows where their library is, when their library will be

open and they know that they can turn to their librarian for help.
And that is all that counts.

Respectfully,
Gershon