

**15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2020**

## **Question and Answer**

Antyodoy Anath Ashram – Paushi Khagendra Sishu Siksha Kendar (Free Primary School)

Communications with Mr. Manoj Dey via WhatsApp call this morning.

Responses to questions that came up during Asha Austin meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> Sept.2020 :

This is with respect to the discussion we had, during the meeting, about moving the first installment of the payment for transportation towards utilization in buying smartphones for the teachers to facilitate virtual teaching during pandemic times.

### **1. How many smartphones were purchased, and to whom do they belong?**

Four smartphones were purchased, and they are the property of Antyodoy Ashram. It has been loaned to those teachers, who do not have smartphones, to facilitate their virtual teaching using video calls during pandemic lockdowns. Once school re-opens, the phones will be returned to the ashram.

### **2. Is virtual education being made available to all students? How are the students who don't have access to smart phones managing?**

Antyodoy ashram management is taking whatever possible measures it can to ensure that instructions in school work are reaching all their students in some form or another.

Residents at the ashram have in-house teachers, and older kids help the younger ones. The children also engage in online education via video in partnership with an organization called ADORE INDIA'S (<https://adoreindia.org>).

Students who are not residents at the ashram are generally taught via phone calls. If the students have access to smartphones, they learn via video calls. In the absence of a smartphone, audio calls are used. If the students' family does not have phones in their homes, then phones are borrowed from relatives or neighbors for a set time, whenever possible. About 75-80% of students have phone accessibility (smart or traditional) in some manner. For the rest of the students who don't have any phone accessibility, worksheets are given or they are taught in-person by the teachers who live close to their residence.

The schooling is not uniform across all the students because of the challenges presented due to the different circumstances of different kids, however every possible effort is taken to maintain a continuity in their education.

### **3. How is the expenditure for data plans and phone bills covered?**

Internet access has not been a challenge, and affordable internet services are available.

Students receive calls and therefore do not incur expenditure. Phone bills of teachers arising for educational purposes are covered by Antyodoy Ashram from the Asha funds for line item "Electricity and Telephone, estimated at ₹ 72000 / year."

**29<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2020**

Communications with Mr. Manoj Dey via WhatsApp call this morning.

Responses to questions that came up during Asha Austin meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept.2020 :

This meeting was focused on updates from Antyodoy, their response to the Covid-19 pandemic, their budget, and their utilization of the first disbursement. The following questions were raised, and the answers obtained from Mr. Manoj Dey are recorded here.

**1. Who installed the sanitization gate at the entrance to the Ashram?**

The sanitization gate was donated by the government of West Bengal. The ashram is located in an area which is a designated Covid hotspot, and so they were given a sanitization gate to keep the children and residents safe.

**2. What is the division of resident to non-resident students of KSSK?**

Counting from the list of students provided by Antyodoy, there are a total of 298 students belonging to grades from lower pre-primary class through IV. Out of these, 32 students are residents and 266 are non-residents. (Grade IV: 13R/43NR, Grade III: 5R/63NR, Grade II: 5R/29NR, Grade I: 3R/34NR, Upper pre-primary: 1R/61NR, Lower pre-primary: 5R/63NR)

**3. Are the non-resident students of KSSK taught only virtually?**

Almost all of the education given is via virtual schooling, through video calls using smart phones, or through audio calls when video is not available. Sometimes a teacher may physically go to a students' house to drop off worksheets/HW, or to check on them. This is however not an established routine. Only as and when it's possible or required, a teacher may visit a student. However teachers hold virtual classes every week day.

**4. Do resident students of KSSK also receive virtual classes from the same teachers as non-resident students?**

Yes. The teachers have students assigned to them as per grades. They are responsible for the students, whether they are residents or non-residents. They hold virtual classes, sometimes for groups of 3-4 students. Sometimes teachers are allowed to come into the ashram for giving in-person lessons to the resident students of KSSK.

Apart from this, the resident students receive virtual education, of mostly general knowledge, from an organization called ADORE INDIA'S (<https://adoreindia.org>). Also older residents, mostly college students, help in teaching the younger children in person.

**5. How long are the virtual classes?**

The teachers are asked to conduct virtual schooling from approximately 10am to 4pm similar to how it used to be before the pandemic. Every teacher is assigned a list of students of a particular grade that they are responsible for, and they are asked to instruct their students every day. They sometimes teach in groups of 3-4 students. Classes are held with breaks in between for both students and teachers.

**6. Is there a plan in place to start in-person classes safely when mandatory opening of schools are announced by the government?**

The West Bengal government's education department is formulating protocols for transition to safe in-person classes. When completed, these will be distributed to the schools. AAA KSSK will abide by the protocols laid down by the government. If they deem necessary, they may introduce extra measures to keep staff and students safe and healthy. Apart from this they are already cleaning and sanitizing the area, and educating on healthy habits.

**7. How is the ashram (apart from KSSK primary schools) supported?**

The ashram has well-wishers who have supported them. Before the pandemic they fund-raised through door to door collection. Lockdown imposed due to the pandemic has made this impossible. They have continued to raise funds when required by communicating via phone calls, emails, WhatsApp etc. They also have taken loans.