Gramin Vikas Samiti virtual site visit report (by Shivani Prasad)

Date and time : 9th Feb’22 @ 8.30 PM PT
Attendees: Shivani Prasad, Siddharth Deshpande, Vishal Kathuria, Harshi Desai, Krishna Pagadala, Vijay Poduri, Tejaswini Popuri, Shoba Vishwanath
Project partner: Govind Yadav

Background on the project discussed during the meeting:
GVS is one of newer projects added to Asha SV with Edu impact 2020. This project is implementation of Childline 1098 in Damoh district of Madhya Pradesh. The proposal for Edu impact 2020 was to sponsor GVS with a vehicle equipped with basic medical facilities. In addition, they also needed support for driver’s and counselor’s salaries. They also have some admin expenses. Asha SV disbursed the funds for the vehicle in 2020 and they have been utilizing it in rescue and rehabilitation efforts. In the past year(2021), Asha has sponsored them (3.8L + 1.85L INR) for covid relief.

Govind Yadav, the project partner, joined the video call over Zoom. The entire staff of GVS was also present in the office. Although there was no social distance, all of the staff was wearing a mask(other than Govind ji who was talking).

He showed us the entire office, the vehicle that was sponsored by Asha SV and introduced us to all of the staff. He also walked us through the process of dispatching aid when a call arrives on the helpline. He seemed to have a good knowledge of the operations of the NGO and offered a good overview of operations of the past, current and the future works.

Regarding the operations of last year, he informed us that GVS had intervened in 1022 cases between Feb’21 to Jan’22. In that, 83 cases were that of child marriage. In their findings, they have seen that a girl child is more likely to be married sooner than a boy child. In addition, they have also intervened in cases of sexual harassment and starvation. In the past year, they haven’t received a single case that they haven’t intervened. Before the vehicle arrived, they had trouble reaching the remote areas of the district but now with the vehicle as well as a counselor, they are able to help out more and more children in need.

He mentioned several specific achievements from the past year. One such was when a small truck carrying child laborers overturned and GVS received an emergency call. The team took the seriously hurt children to Jabalpur and got others treated in Tendukheda. In another incident, a 3 year old child was found wandering in a jungle area. A vigilant citizen called 1098, and the team reached there along with the local police. They brought the child to Damoh, got medical treatment and initiated the legal process. They later figured that the kid was from Chattarpur. Their mother had left the family and their brother worked as a laboror. The kid is currently in a children’s home in Chattarpur.

They wish to create a child friendly society while working with government and other agencies to address any injustice and inequality towards them.
He mentioned that just the previous night, they received a call on the childline that a boy had lost his cell phone which he had purchased by taking out a loan. GVS’ team went there to help the child and also involved the cyber cell. The kid did not have the receipt of purchase so they went to the store where they had purchased the phone and requested the store to provide a copy of the receipt.

There have been several cases of missing kids. GVS has been able to reunite 20 kids, who have gone missing, with their families. There was a case where the kid was found in Gwalior and was reunited with his family.

There have been cases where GVS helped kids who were being harassed for having sent inappropriate messages.

In the past year, they have not only provided emotional support to the children but also helped them with dry food rations. There were kids who couldn’t afford to pay their tuition fees and the school wasn’t letting them attend classes. In some of those cases, they spoke to the school authorities to handle the issue.

They have also seen a steep increase in cases of beggary. The kids involved in these activities have no backups and no food. They have intervened and counseled 39 such kids. There is not much from their end that they can do at the moment but they wish to be able to help out more on this. They have provided emotional support and dry food to such kids. Most of these kids belong to the nat community(former street performers) and belong to the SC community. They are predominantly rag pickers and sell polyethylene bags to junk/scrap dealers(kabari wala). They have plans to bridge them to the mainstream via an activity center for which they don’t have any financial support, at the moment.

**Infrastructure:**

The office had a few rooms as well as space for parking the vehicle and two-wheelers for the staff. They had the driver, Sachin, sitting in the vehicle. Neelam ji who handles the incoming calls, writes down all the details from the call and informs the necessary staff that needs to be dispatched for helping out the child. Generally, 2 staff members are dispatched per call. If the case needs police support, they call the police en route.

**Questions:**

Q. How many staff members are there? On an average, how many calls do they see during the day?
A. The office runs 24*7 and they have 3 shifts.
   1. 8 am - 4 pm
   2. 4 pm -10 pm
   3. 10 pm - 8 am
They have 2 counselors (Bharti ji and Deepika ji), 1 coordinator, 1 driver and 7 other staff members. In all, 11 staff members.

Sometimes the counselors have to accompany the kids to the court as well as moral support. Ajita ji and Neelam ji attend the calls and help with operations as well as needed. The number of cases varies slightly but on an average they see 2-3 cases per day.

Are there any other organizations in Damoh for 1098 operations?
There are several organizations working for children but none for childline.

Q. Does GVS receive any government support?
A. They received the salary for team members. Currently, they receive 8k per month for 9 members. There are organizational delays as well with Govt support. In such cases, they use emergency funds from their board or take out a loan to pay them salary.

Q. What campaigns do they run for child marriage awareness?
A. They haven't run such a campaign. They generally work in smaller areas with bal panchayats by providing help and raising awareness. They also designate self help groups etc.

Q. How much would such a campaign cost?
A. It depends on the reach of the campaign. Smaller campaigns that involve going around villages and with mic raising awareness would cost less. They could also go to farmers markets and raise awareness.