

Site visit Report - JOSH (Joint Operation for Social Help)

Feb 25th 2026

My name is Mohit Sood, a volunteer with Asha Austin. I visited JOSH (Joint Operation for Social Help) on Feb 25th, 2026 mainly to meet Aheli Choudhry and Saurabh Sharma, founders of JOSH since we are considering partnering with them on a new initiative to advocate RTE to be expanded beyond 8th grade with them. This wasn't a surprise visit since it was my first time visiting them.

They invited me to meet them at one of their centres in Trilokpuri, New Delhi. The programme at this location was being funded by Asha Silicon Valley (<https://ashanet.org/project/?pid=1322>). This project's focus is to help girls that drop out of government or private schools after 8th grade to complete their high secondary (9- 12 grade) education. Their learnings from this type of initiative has led them to believe that a ratification of the RTE act is needed to include government supported education till 12 grade.

So, my drive from Gurgaon to reach Trilokpuri was 2 hrs and since I started around 10:30 am, it would have been beyond noon when I would have reached. I learnt in the morning that due to Ramadan, a lot of students at the location were planning to leave by noon. So, we decided to meet all the students over a video call while I was in the car.

There were about 22 students that had come that day. Normally the timings are 10am - 12pm. All the students introduced themselves one by one. They were all girls sitting on the floor.

Since 3 students had to leave, I spoke to them one by one over the video call.

First one shared how she had dropped out of school after getting married at an early age. She has a young daughter now. She was really depressed and tried to take her life couple of times. Then she found Josh and restarted her studies. Said folks at Josh are very supportive. She was very grateful to Josh and felt emotional describing her background. She just passed her 10th board exams last October. She plans to continue her studies for 12th. She is planning to do Arts or maybe look into nursing as an option in future.

Second student also shared that she had dropped out because she didn't do well in Math in Govt school. She lost her confidence but then found Josh which helped her get back to studies. She just passed her 10th exams also. She likes historical art work and like to paint.

Third student (Rubina) was much older than the first two. She has two daughters. She stopped studying after marriage. But then with support from Josh and her family, she started her studies again and passed 10th. She will be giving 12th board exams in October. She mentioned that her

family including her kids were skeptical at first but now after her success they believe that it is possible. In future, she wants to work with JOSH in this line of work.

I reached around 12:30 pm. It was not easy to find the office because there was no signage outside. One of the teachers, Shabnam came down to meet me and take me up. The classroom/office was on the 3rd floor. I met with Aheli and Saurabh in their office. We chatted for some time. We discussed various topics. They explained to me NIOS and EWS. Students who drop out and cannot enroll back in government school can enroll in NIOS to give 10th and 12th board exams. Josh has two teachers, Shabnam and ? who prepare them for studies. For younger kids, Josh helps parents register their children in private schools under the EWS scheme in RTE act. EWS is a scheme where each private school has to allocate 10% of their admission to economically disadvantaged groups. There was a staff member, Jyoti, who was working with parents in registration since it is all online now.

Normally the classes happen between 10am-12pm. Students stayed longer to meet me. They were eager to leave because of Ramzan so they wrapped up their classes and went home once I got there. Two of them were able to stay back to talk to me. They mentioned why and when they dropped out. They talked about how they got connected with JOSH and resumed their studies. One of them had cleared 10th and is now pursuing 12th. She shared that she dropped out from school when her grandfather fell sick. The other student was preparing for 10th.

Later, Jyoti showed an example application of EWS for a few children to me. She also mentioned that the application process is harder now because they now ask for residential proof, where you have to present utility bills. Most of the parents do not have that because they are tenants.

After this, Aheli, Saurabh, Shabnam and I went back into the office to chat more. They showed me

- Attendance register for all the students for last few months
- List of students who dropped out of school and have joined JOSH
- Math baseline tests for students who joined
- NIOS Admission form
- NOIS Board exam results

I took a few pictures of each of the above.

We went back in time on how they started JOSH and how over time the organization and its work has evolved. We also discussed the motivation of why they want to start the RTE initiative.

Photos

<https://asha4education.smugmug.com/Asha-Austin/JOSH/JOSH-Site-visit-Feb-2026/n-zMMvtf>