

Aralu Site Visit Report

Date: 1st June, 2019

Performed By: Sai Kumar

About Aralu PPC in Yedlapur

Aralu is NGO run in Bidar by K.T. Meril and his wife Sunitha. Both manage several other activities like Prevention of Child Marriage, Child education, Dalit empowerment and Child trafficking. Meril and Sunitha have received several awards for their contribution towards social development. **All photos of site visit were inserted in the appendix.**

Aralu PPC has 40 kids aged 3 to 7 years. Their parents are daily wage labour working in unsafe conditions. As government has no Anganwadi center set up in the village, Aralu supports PPC with 100% monetary support from ASHA Chicago chapter.

Until few years ago ASHA used to support another PPC in Mirzapur. As Government set up Anganwadi in Mirzapur, NGO supported PPC is closed. Staff at PPC is recruited into Anganwadi. This is a good sign as government is, finally, taking up its responsibility. It also reduces fiscal burden on ASHA chapter.

This is my second site visit. My first trip, back in 2012, was more of a exposure kind. This time, keeping in mind that funds are on hold, I was inquisitive about budget requirements. Not sounding too mean, lots of questions were asked regarding how funds were spent and demands of additional budget.

I visited PPC during summer holidays. Many of the kids were out of station. There are 20 kids present. Some of the outgoing kids were also present. Kids recited numbers, alphabets and performed cultural activities. Teacher

and nanny (Anjamma and Ratnamma) were present. As I don't know Kannada, I was asking questions to Meril about project. It would have been more helpful if I could directly interact with kids and get their feedback.

Observations

- Surprise visit has to be done once academic year starts to get the honest picture about strength of pupils, educational material, and playing material. Given our chapter meets the budget by requesting from other chapters, we have to be more careful in analyzing budget.
- Meril said that there were 41 kids last academic year. 12 students left PPC. They are expecting 11 students in the upcoming academic year. So total will be 40 students. Budget estimates have to be revised to 40 students vis-à-vis 45 students in proposal.
- There are 2 rooms in PPC. Both are small to accommodate 40 students. Bigger and better place can be rented. In the budget proposal, rent was charged Rs. 1,830 per month. This sounds too high for a small village like Yedlapur. To my shock, there is no power connection, water supply to the center. It's a mud floor. Center has no toilets. I asked Meril to demand owner for more facilities for the given rent. Meril said that by next visit, demands would be taken care of.
- Villagers don't use toilets constructed by Swachh Bharat Mission. There is no toilet at the center. Kids go outside for relieving themselves. Meril can contact authorities for constructing toilets.
- Meril proposed that 2 pairs of clothes can be given to kids. This is not mentioned in 2019-20 budget. If funds permit, this demand can be accommodated.
- There is power line and pole next to PPC. Center land owner must be asked to provide power supply.
- Mud floor can be replaced by Red Epoxy floor, which is not expensive.
- There is a 5000 expenditure quote in budget for limestone plastering of walls. I believe this has to be done by owner, not tenants. I couldn't get to meet the owner. Otherwise, I should have demanded more about the rent and facilities.
- Every year, there is 10% increase in honorarium for staff. We need to check if they are putting all out efforts towards children needs.

Surprise visit should be done, preferably, by Kannada speaking person to appraise the project.

Belaku Residential Home at Aishpur

Belaku is a residential home for 25 children. These children are mostly abandoned kids. Aralu provides accommodation, food, clothes and tuition to the children. Meril received several awards for managing this home. He set up this home in his own agricultural land. Currently home has 25 children (16 girls and 9 boys).

Observations

- 21 kids were present at the time of visit. Some kids went to their parents place during summer holidays.
- Toilets are constructed using previous budget funds. Water tank was installed on top of toilets. Recently Langurs have damaged water tank. It was repaired using own funds of Sunitha.
- Construction of kitchen was mostly done. Tiles have to be laid. Once water problem is solved, water tank and pipes can be laid for kitchen.
- I had the opportunity to felicitate 6 girls who cleared 10th and 12th class exams. Girl who passed PUC is planning to pursue nursing course. Meril requested for more funds to help Passovers in pursuing higher studies.
- I met Surekha (Warden), Ratnamma (Headcook), Anitha (Assistant cook) and Gangaram (caretaker). Bhemannanna (watchman) will come in the night. Tuition teacher will come once academic year starts. She teaches computer as well.
- Exposure trip is planned to Bengaluru for Vistaar organization programme.
- Meril requested funds in one instalment instead of two so that he gets additional interest of Rs 15,000. This is to be given thought after surprise visit.
- Vidyaniketan school provided 4 computers to home. Yehonna teach computer to the kids.

Specific Questions

Revathi asked me for four specific things to be addressed clearly. Those are borewell, Input Metrics, Audit Report and Success stories.

Borewell Estimation

This year Meril has requested for additional two lakh rupees for borewell. Belaku used to get water from neighbor for last 12 years. For last two years, drought conditions prevail. So all borewells dried up. Currently water tank comes every 4-5 days which costs Rs. 1000 per trip. This is not sustainable once academic year starts. So borewell has to be laid out for long run.

Input Metrics

Meril will fill the input metrics this week and send it over. As many kids were out of station, I couldn't fill metrics by myself.

Audit Report

Meril said that audit report was shipped from Bengaluru. They would get it soon. I told him that funds will be held till audit report and input metrics are sent.

Success Stories

Meril had taken pictures of girls who cleared 10th and PUC exams. He will send their stories very soon. This is for corporate grants.

Recommendations

- Every year, there is 10 percent increase in every budget item. Do we need to honour this assumption? If we don't have enough funds, we can exercise restraint. In last 4 years, Belaku budget has shot up from 8.5 lakh to 16 lakh.
- We provide 100% budgetary support for both PPC and residential home. Site visits have to be done often and with surprise element in order to be vigilant.

Appendix

Social work done by Meril and Suntiha



linderharts1@gmail.com

kIds reciting alphabets and numerals



Mud flooring can be observed. Room is not so lit and cramped.



Kids displaying educational and playing material







Belaku Residential Home



New



Newly constructed kitchen and toilets







Hostel dormitory



Computer lab





Snap with Meril (Me in yellow Asha tee)