# Site Visit Report – Astha

## April 10th, 2019

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I visited Astha on Wednesday.  I met Hamza and Pratik.  Last time I had visited, Rupin was the project director.  I was told that Rupin had left and now Pratik was in charge.  I also met Radhika.

My impressions:

* Astha is now focusing on outreach programs. They have centers in other parts of Delhi and the Astha office does lot of dissemination. The Govindpuri center has been closed down.
* The help line gets on average of about 3-4 calls per day- about 100 calls per month.  Most of these callers want information about how to get income certificate, pension for disabled persons, id cards etc.
* The Resource center plays a major role in outreach activities. They have prepared a guidebook for hand signs.  They are also preparing other teaching materials. Last time I visited the resource center there were about 15-20 children.  This time there were only 6 children.  There were two teachers- Babita and Kiran (?).  Kiran apparently has been shifted to another project now and they are hiring a new teacher.  However, on that day Kiran was teaching the 6 children. Pratik did tell me that the enrollment has dropped down but he did not elaborate on the reasons.  One possibility could be that this is a transition phase (Rupin to Pratik).  But the other possibility I think is that Astha is undergoing a paradigm shift and they are focusing more on outreach programs rather than on teaching.
* Pratik also mentioned that they have started work in Gorakhpur where children have been affected with Japanese encephalitis.  The fever leads to both developmental and physical disability and they have been working with teams in and around Gorakhpur.  Some members from Astha visit Gorakhpur to impart training to these teams.  They are also coordinating with the government officials there.  I was left with a strong impression that this is one area that they want to focus now.
* Pratik and Radhika also told me that they are planning to work with young adults who have dropped out or have never been to school.  They want to explore the open school option to get these children a school leaving certificate.  The children will enroll into open school and attend the classes conducted by NIOS.  In addition, Astha will provide supporting educational materials (they were emphatic that they will not be running a tuition center).
* The resource center has also coordinated with BALA to make learning materials.  I saw some of them but the children were not using them at that point.

My major concern:

The enrollment of children in the resource center is really poor.  No satisfactory explanation was provided.  I have no issues if they are shifting their focus but they need to make it clear before applying for the next budget.  And it should be reflected in the budget.









