Asha Darshan April 2013 Site Visit Report
Ritika Garg

Deen Dayal Singh (Asha, Kaithi) visited Asha Darshan (AD) during April 2013 and sent Asha – Silicon Valley the following progress report (written in Hindi): http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/284/Asha_Darshan_report_2013.pdf Following is an English translation of the report we received in Hindi. (Note: this translation only covers the most important points related to the project.)

Education Centers:
AD operations (education and other social welfare activities) are spread over 50 villages across 40 KM and runs 11 education centers out of which 7 were visited.

1. Satyanarayanpur School:
   ● Started in 2000
   ● Situated nearly 15 kms from Tamulpur (AD main office)
   ● Local population: Bengali, Adivasi (400 families)
   ● Classes: 1st to 5th grade
   ● 254 students currently enrolled (started with 5 students in year 2000)
   ● 6 teachers
   ● Classes are run in one big hall divided into 5 rooms using wooden screens.
   ● Teachers’ training is done from time to time.
   ● Students join AD’s Abhaypur school after passing 5th std. from this school.

Problems/Requirements:
- No facility of drinking water
- No proper toilets
- Books are not provided on time
- Sports equipments required
- One more teacher required for nursery
- No teaching aid

Schools have helped in spreading the awareness in the village about social responsibilities and importance of education. People have stopped drinking alcohol and they send their children to schools regularly. One former student is now teaching in the schools after passing 12th grade.

2. Abhaypur School:
   ● Started in 2006
   ● Classes: 6th to 8th grade
● 100 students enrolled currently
● 4 teachers
● School management committee of 15 local people is created which tries to fulfill school requirements.
● School has a big playground.
● Last year, all 8th grade pass out students are continuing their education and joined 9th in other schools.

Problems/Requirements:
- No facility of drinking water
- No proper toilets
- Books are not provided on time
- Sports equipments required
- One more teacher required for nursery
- No teaching aid

3. Devipur School:
● Situated nearly 4 kms from Satyanarayanpur village
● Local population: Bengali, Santali (80% are daily laborers and 20% are farmers)
● AD started providing financial and other support to this school in 2005
● 89 students enrolled currently
● Government school is located around 3 kms from the village.

Problems/Requirements:
- No proper toilets
- Books are not provided on time

4. Nagapur School (Bodo medium):
● Situated nearly 20 kms from Tamulpur center, right at India - Bhutan border
● Local population: Bodo, Santali, Adivasi (Farmers and daily laborers)
● 2 AD schools are run in Nagapur village. One in Bodo medium and other in Assam medium
● Bodo medium classes: 6th to 10th grade
● AD had started Balwadi (pre school) in 2000 which was taken over by government.
● AD then started 6th to 10th grade school in 2002
● 156 students currently enrolled (75 girls, 81 boys)
● 6 teachers

5. Nagapur School (Assam medium):
● 236 students currently enrolled (108 girls, 128 boys)
● 5 teachers
2nd, 3rd and 4th grade classes are taken together in one room by one teacher.

Last year, 18 students passed 10th grade. Out of which 15 students are continuing their education. Other 3 couldn’t continue education due to financial problems and are currently working.

**Activities in Nagapur Schools:**
- Students are given vocational training
- Medical training is given to students
- Comics workshop was conducted last year through which students could express various social issues.
- Sports activities are conducted regularly.
- Armed Border Force had taken some AD students for an Educational Tour to Kolkata where they won 6 prizes in different sports competitions.
- Some students and teachers are also involved in farming on a land near school.

**Problems/Requirements:**
- There should be library on school campus
- No proper facility of drinking water and toilets
- Sports equipments required
- Books are not provided on time

6. **Silipur School:**
- Local people: Bodo (Mostly farmers)
- Class: 6th to 8th grade
- 74 students currently enrolled (43 girls, 31 boys)
- 3 teachers
- Mostly students continue their education after passing out from this school.

**Problems/Requirements:**
- No proper facility of drinking water and toilets.

7. **Lakhinarayanpur School:**
- Local people: Bengali, Adivasi (Mostly daily laborers)
- School was started in 1982 by village people and AD joined it in 2005
- 101 students currently enrolled (57 girls, 44 boys)
- 4 teachers
- School building was constructed by Indian Army people.
- This school has DISE code so they got books from government.
- Last year, 27 students passed 8th grade. Out of which 4 students discontinued studies as higher schools are far and students don’t have money to buy cycle.
- Child marriage problem exists in this village but situation has gotten better since school started
running properly.

**Problems/Requirements:**
- No proper facility of drinking water and toilets.

**Suggestions:**
1. Facilities of drinking water and proper toilets should be provided.
2. Books should be provided on time and government should be pressurized for it.
3. Every school should have a library.
4. Teaching aid should be available in every school in required quantity.
5. Teachers’ training should be done at least once a year.
6. Sports equipments are specially requested by students.
7. AD’s Self Help Groups and Mahila Shanti Sena people should be involved with schools.

**Mid-Day Meals:**
Mid-day meals are not provided in schools from some time. According to teachers, meals help to increase the attendance of students. Irregularity in mid-day meals facility is creating doubts in people’s mind and is not good for AD’s image. It’s important to provide Mid-day meals regularly.

**Self Help Groups:**
Self Help Group (SHG) of Satyanarayanpur village and Hajong Basti village were visited.

**Satyanarayanpur SHGs:**
- This SHG was started in 2002
- Veena Verma is head of this group.
- Group was started so that easy loans could be available to the villagers.
- Currently, 3 groups are running in this village with 15 women in each group.
- These groups currently have Rs 22,000 in total, out of which Rs 18,000 are taken as loan and rest amount is deposited in bank.
- 5% interest is charged on loan per month.
- 2 meetings are conducted every month. During these meetings, groups’ working is discussed and people who require loan put their proposal. Group as a whole decides if the loan should be provided or not.
- Loans are taken mainly for 2 reasons: a) For starting small business and b) For medical purpose

**Hajong Basti SHGs:**
- Started in 2002
- 2 groups are running in this village. One is named Bhagwati group and another is Mayawati
group.
- Bhagwati group has 15 people and is head by Jyosna Sarkar.
- Every person of the group saves Rs 20 every month with the group.
- Mayawati group has 20 people and is head by Parvati Sarkar.
- Every person of the group saves Rs 10 every month with the group.
- These groups currently have Rs 45,000 in total, out of which Rs 20,000 are taken as loan and rest amount is deposited in bank.
- 2 meetings are conducted every month.
- Loan process, interest rate and reasons are same as earlier group.

AD has also created a single association of SHGs and any SHG can join this association but each member of that SHG has to make a one time deposit of Rs 250 as joining fee. This association also give loans to members at 2% per month interest rate. This association meets twice in a month. AD keeps all the records of this association which are presented in front of all the members once a year.

**Mahila Shanti Sena:**
AD started these groups so that villagers can solve any social problems/fights within the group peacefully and to spread the awareness about social responsibilities and importance of peaceful living. Hajong Basti village’s women were visited and they told about a situation in which a case that was reported with police was solved by villagers themselves and was taken back from police.

**Women’s Vocational Training:**
AD provides training in different occupations like making clothes, stichting, handicraft etc. in 2 centers. One center is in Tamulpur and another in Bogajuli. Currently, 6 women are working in these centers. Different products like bed sheets, bags etc are made by these women which are then sold by AD in a shop situated in Tamulpur. Money received from the sales of these products is then given back to those women.

**Asha Darshan’s Requirements:**
1. AD’s main office situated in Tamulpur needs around Rs 13 lakhs for construction completion.
2. Clothes making center needs funds for floor and windows’ construction. Budget is around Rs 8 lakhs.
3. Require a big hall for teachers’ training and women’s vocational training. Budget is Rs 15 lakhs.