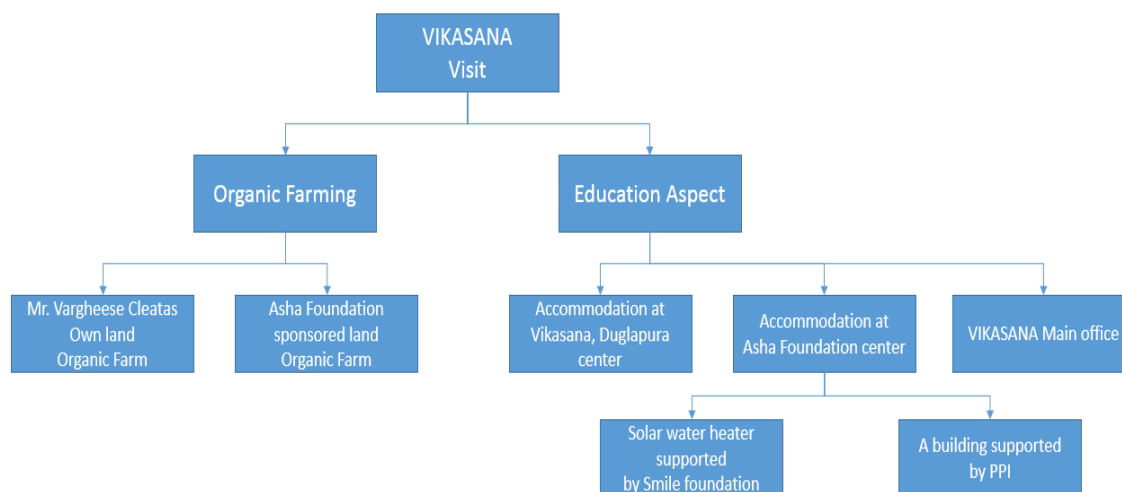


Vikasana Site Visit Aug 2015: Observation Report

Project Implementing Agency : **VIKASANA**
Project name : Children bridge school programme-Duglapura
Organization : Vikasana Trust,
Location : P B No.23, TARIKERE-577228,
Duglapura village, Chikmagalore dist, Karnataka, India.
Contact Person : A.M.Varghees Cleatas,
Chairman/Project director,
Mobile: 09448224872, 08261-222500,
E-mail id : ngovikasana@gmail.com
Web site : www.ngovikasana.org
Supporting agency : Asha for Education, Seattle, USA
Date of visit : 29th August 2015
Visitor's Name : Mr. Kiran Kumar YC, on behalf of Sharan Asundi,
Asha for Education, Bangalore
E-mail id : kirankumar.yc@gmail.com or
Mobile No. +91-9886711978
And
Mr. Manjunath, Software Engineer, Bangalore

Objectives of the visit:

- To visit Duglapura children bridge school centre and interaction with children to know their educational status
- To interact with the teachers, programme director and know the updates about the status of children bridge school
- To know the status of sustainable land development activities undertaken for improvement in Organic Farming, etc.,



The Journey Begins:

On the early morning of August 29th 2015 Saturday at 5.50 am left from BANGALORE CY JN (SBC) to BIRUR JN (RRB) in Train and reached at around 09:15 am to Birur Railway station, I was picked up from Birur Railway station from Mr. Vargheese Cleatas Sir & by Prasanna (the Vikasana trust driver). After a drive of about less than hour, we reached the one of the Vikasana accommodation center. There I had the opportunity of meeting a teacher and cook person at Vikasana center it had accommodations like office, library, hostel and a kitchen for children's and also the agricultural farm land inside the Vikasana accommodation center.

Then Visited Mr. Vargheese Cleatas organic farm land attached to his house and visited to his house, add chance to talk Ms Cleatas and their two Daughters who are very knowledgeable about herbal medicines and grows many herbs in their farm/nursery.

About Mr. Cleatas farm: In order to understand organic and natural farming, Mr. Cleatas has bought an acre & half of land right outside his house and has been farming there for a few years. He had this farm as 'model farm' for other famers to visit, understand natural farming and practice it for themselves. Before he purchased the land, it was used by a farmer who used chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Mr. Cleatas has been growing coconut, areca nut, elephant leg gourd, bananas, chickoos, many medicinal herbs etc in the farm. I was accompanied by Mr. Cleatas's & Prasanna who showed me around the Mr. Cleatas's model farm is a zero cultivation farm. They have facility for drip irrigation, but Ms Cleatas mentioned that they hardly need to water the plants and trees, as they have a rain water harvesting pit which increases the ground water level pretty high and keeps the soil at the surface moist. They too have a bio gas plant, provision for making 'Jeevanamruta' and reuse water as much as possible. They have provision for generation of electricity using solar energy in their house. The yield of the farm is pretty high and they send a significant amount of vegetables and fruits to both the hostels and they have kept the farm house very neat and clean.

They have a few cows which give them milk and provide the essential ingredient of 'Jeevan amruta.' They also have a few honey harvesting bee hives around the farm. Mr. Cleatas says natural farming is all about following simple and logical practices. For example, when a branch of a certain tree falls, let the branch decompose into the soil on its own, but a farmer generally tends to remove them from the farm and he thus loses the benefit of natural fertilizer and manure. The farm is sprinkled with some vegetable oils which act as a pesticide. Ajola is an aquatic plant, rich in protein, essential amino acids, vitamin A, B12, Beta carotene, Calcium, Phospate, Iron, Copper, Magnesium, Potassium etc. Dried ajola contains 25-35% protein, 10-15% bio active compounds and polymers. When given to cows it increases the yield of milk up to 1.5 times. It can also be used as manure for plants. Growing Ajola is very easy; all you need is a pit of about 2m X 1m and a few gms of the plant. It reproduces very fast and you can get a kg of Ajola a week which can sell at Rs. 35/kg in the market. Mr. Cleatas also adds that farmers cut and burn the weeds which grow by the roadside, whereas our forefathers used to cut the weeds finely and mix it with organic manure which enriches the soil. It is such practices which differentiates organic farmers from those who use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Mr. Cleatas says that organic farming

can work everywhere. A farmer practicing intercropping and natural farming will not have high expenditure and can live comfortably. Mr. Cleatas rues that it is very difficult to change the mind-set of farmers. They are just not comfortable giving up chemical fertilizers, but it is slowly changing. He also adds that if a certain year there is a rumour circulating that there is going to be a good demand for Organic farming.

And so the Journey of visit ends, but never ends.., actually

I was in a rush to get back to Bangalore on the same day and then to a certain place, so I was dropped off by Mr. Cleatas and his team at around 3.30pm from Vikasana Bridge School Duglapura center. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the employees of Vikasana and all volunteers at Asha for Education foundation for giving me this opportunity to have such an educational and value adding visit. Please feel free to contact me for more information about the visit.

Statistics of bridge school children:

25 Children (07 Girls & 18 Boys) who had educational gap due to working, drop out, migrant, single parent, orphan and etc.,.

Process of visit:

- Interaction with children (about studies, attendance at school, food habits, children feel about the centre, how is the parents cooperation with children and opinion of parents)
- Interaction with teachers (What are activities organised with children, about educational classes, recreational activities, communication with children, way of teaching, cooperation with parents, how is children performance, what are documents maintained, how do they monitor the children, when they take up visit to government school and further sustainability)
- Interaction with counsellor (about the attitude of children, what are the basic problems among children, ambitions, how do they improve the children personality, how do you monitor/ scale up the educational progress and how do you assess the children performance)
- Visited the sustainable agriculture farm (integrated farming, pulses field, kitchen garden, nursery development, coconut plants, fruit bearing trees, timber oriented trees and etc)
- Visited- Solar water heater donated by SMILE foundation
- Visited-additional three building rooms constructed under orphanage children project with the support by People Progress in India (PPI), Seattle.
- Verified the records of children bridge school center
- Involved with the Children Dance programme
- Motivational words to Children towards continue their education
- Visit to VIKASANA office at Tarik ere

Observations/recommendation:

- I know every day evening you give milk once a day, instead I recommend twice a day morning and evening.
- Really Happy to see the Children's going to school and coming back to the bridge school.
- Keep up the good work and cont.. Forever.

Few Pics of visit:













Reported by: Kiran Kumar YC.