

VARUN Virtual Site Visit [May 31, 2023]

Volunteers of Asha SV held a virtual site visit of project VARUN on May 31st 2023. We discussed a gamut of issues with Dr. Singh, founder and leader of the NGO. In addition to that, he also introduced the premises of VARUN's main office [and also where he lives] through video call to the volunteers.

Here are key highlights from the site visit call:

- VARUN has various initiatives in education, agriculture, and healthcare in the region.
- Currently operating in 11 rural educational centres across Naugarh and Sonbhadra districts.
- Each of these regions are plagued by extreme poverty and lack of infrastructure.
- There have been instances in the past where the government “took over” or replaced VARUN school with a formal government school, however, according to Dr. Singh, this is unlikely to happen again in near future.
- Some new initiatives that Asha supported in the recent past have yielded great results. These include:
 - a. All schools barring one now have drinking water supply.
 - b. All schools now have toilets for the children to use.
 - c. All children have access to a library with a variety of books.
 - d. Pre-emptive health checkup camps have been very successful.
- They have recently been able to renew their FCRA certificate.
- Girls hostel construction [funded by Asha] has begun, but we did not dwell much into it since we kept the meeting focused on ongoing educational activities.
- Project partner highlighted two immediate needs for chapter to consider [these are approved in the new annual budget either partially or fully]:
 - a. A motorcycle to be able to access the remote centres easily.
 - b. Medical insurance plan for the staff [those ineligible for Ayushman Bharat scheme]

Apart from the above, we also discussed VARUN's annual report in quick detail. The detailed report can be found here:

https://ashadocserver.s3.amazonaws.com/458_VARUNAnnualReportand2023-24BudgetProposal.pdf

Link to site visit recording:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RQMsgSdu0wjRhPdvZXixGzznF57AW5GB/view?usp=sharing>