Visit by Ashwini Y.S., Journalist, Bangalore

I chanced upon Deenabandhu one and a half years ago. So far I have made around five visits to the ashram, and each time I come back feeling more invigorated.

The children at Deenabandhu are obviously the reason for this feel good factor. It is heartwarming to see the kindness and compassion they exhibit, which is only reflective of the sound, stable and secure environment they are growing up in.

This is in addition to their other attributes. All the children exhibit playfulness, a keen sense of curiosity, openness, confidence, talent and intelligence, which stands testimony to the fact that they are not missing out on the warmth and value based upbringing, which the “privileged” children experience.

Another striking feature about Deenabandhu is the fact that it does not suffer from trust deficit. The hierarchy isn’t imposing, and I noticed that the disciplinary methods adopted here are in good balance. The children have an all time access to the staff and most importantly to Mr Jayadev.

During my recent visit, the schools were closed for summer holidays, and many children had gone home to be with their families. The children who don’t enjoy this luxury were treated with a visit to the ‘betta’ (B R Hills), where Mr Jayadev owns a small farm house. The main attraction of betta is the big tank, which was especially cleaned and filled up with water so that the children could enjoy a swim or a dip. This turned out to be a great hit, like every year, I learnt.

Pure joy writ was on their faces, and the emotion was so tangible that I couldn’t stop capturing those moments on camera. I felt the same emotion coursing through me when they got to climb up on trees housed in an indulgent neighbour’s compound, and pluck unripe guavas. These examples may seem contrived, but for me, it was a privilege to witness beauty in all its simplicity.

I don’t want to dwell on matters related to administration because it would take away from the essence of what Mr Jayadev and his team have so successfully achieved.

I guess what I am trying to say here is that Deenabandhu is untouched by the extraneous factors, and continues to retain its innocence, which is only akin to that of a child.

Mr Jayadev and his team make it all look effortless, but the hard work that goes into catering to every little need of these children, is laudable.