Vigyan Ashram 2019 site visit report

Date: - 29th August 2019
Volunteers: - Srihari Suthamally, Subhalakshmi Ganesan and Ananya Srihari
Vigyan Ashram: - Vishal, Ranjeet and others

Every time I go to Vigyan Ashram there is a sense of familiarity. And this familiarity arises from the fact that: - I have been going here for more than 8 years I think, the setup is almost the same, the VA side faces are the same as well apart from some new faces.

This time also it was no exception. I went with my family on 29th August after taking first half of the day off. We were there right on time for the breakfast at around 9:30. The breakfast which as usual was very very tasty consisted of spicy Pohe and some milk.

Post Breakfast Ranjeet took me on a tour of the site. First as usual we went to the Electrical/Mechanical/Fab Unit, where I was shown around the new stuff that is going around, especially I was happy to note that they have come up with a rotating composting unit (I have got one for home as well). Then in the FAB unit saw some new models that have been introduced. Talked with Suhas who is currently in charge of the labs. Interestingly he is an alumnus of the FAB Labs and also he is a manufacturer.

Then went to the rooms above the mess which houses the Fabric Academy, Wiki Centre along with IT lab. Harshada who is incharge of the fabric academy showed me some of the prototypes especially I was impressed with a “jacket” which was manufactured by a “program”. Then in the IT labs I was shown the work that is getting done to create wiki pages in Marathi wiki (https://mr.wikipedia.org/s/3ia). As part of this initiative they are translating wiki pages to Marathi, approving content that are uploaded by other users etc. As part of IT lab they are also scanning Marathi books, currently they are scanning first edition texts of Tilakji (using a high resolution scanner)

From there we went to the “animal husbandry” site where they have currently kept a Plastic Pyrolysis machine which takes in plastic waste to convert into fuel. This will be a great machine for the DBRT students to work on and understand and see how they can solve the solid waste problem prevailing in Pune. They are using a Rotary Kiln machine which is supposedly energy efficient, even with this efficiency Ranjeet was saying it is not profitable. They will have to make some modifications to make it more profitable.

Next in the labs we were shown work that is going on in bio-culture production. This was also very interesting area of study.

Also saw a “weekly” class going on in the classroom taken by Vishal sir, so could not discuss more with the students. Need to plan a visit early next year when the students will be more used to the place and will be more communicative.
Class in Progress

New Hostel sponsored by Asha for Education and other organizations
Rotary Composter

Key Unit made by FAB Labs
Grey Water Recycling Unit

Scanner (high speed)
Bio-culture

Programmed Jacket