**ASHA FOR EDUCATION**

**Site visit report**

**OCTOBER, 2013**

By

Ajay Dixit-Ahmedabad, India.

**ASHA FOR EDUCATION**

**Date of visit: 12th October, 2013.**

**Places of visit : Bharuch, Vagara, Dahej and other villages.**

**Purpose of visit:**

Asha For Education has provided financial support to Gram Vikas Trust, Bharuch [GVT] for two projects:

**[1] Bicycle project under Girl Child Education, and**

**[2] Support A Child Project (SAC)**

**OBJECTIVES:**

Main objective of Site visit was mainly to get first hand impression about current status of both the projects and suggest suitable strategies to scale it further. Purpose was not to audit or to find out irregularities etc. More importantly, it was meant to find out impact and usefulness of the Donations provided by Asha for Education of USA. This visit was announced and GVT officials confirmed date of my visit and gave assurance that maximum people will be available for the interaction. However, due to holiday, they failed to get beneficiaries for interaction.

Details of this visit along with my observations are as follows:

**1. VISIT TO GVT OFFICE AT BHAURCH**

Along with Chairman GVT Shri Rameshbhai, I had meeting with administrative staff of GVT and brief introduction of their activities. Majority of the donors of GVT are international donors and in all they are handling more than 15 projects with adequate field staff to undertake various social issues on behalf of their donors and sponsors. Asha for Education is among those few international organizations that have provided very less amount of donation compared to other international donors to GVT. Considering the importance of projects Asha for Education is promoting through GVT, I am of the opinion that donation amount from Asha for Education should increase minimum 50-60% as money provided to GVT is used for educating children of BPL family only.

**2. VISIT TO VAGARA TOWN AND MEETING WITH BRC COORDINATOR**

Along with Shri Rameshbhai, I went to meet Shri K. S. Goswami, Block Resource Centre coordinator of education department of Govt. of Gujarat. As a block coordinator, he looks after 72 schools in Vagara taluka. I also met Shri Mehbub Dagmaster who is employed as cluster coordinator under BRC. We had detailed discussion about various problems in current education systems.

***Problem of non-availability of teachers*:**

One of the most difficult problems we are facing is non-availability of the teachers in the various schools in rural areas. This is very critical and urgent issue that needs to be addressed immediately. It is a fact that our state government has its own limitation to solve this problem. Situation in various schools is very bad, there is need for 310 teachers but nobody is available and/or willing to work in schools that are in remote places. Current situation is such that in a school that has students from standard 1-8, there are only two teachers. There is urgent need of 32 teachers in 72 schools in this taluka and if they do not get teachers then it is a matter of great worry and concern that who will teach children from next month onwards.

Shri Rameshbhai promised to provide 15 teachers for schools in Vagara taluka. Looking at this problem I am of the opinion that:

a. GVT should get more donations from Asha for Education to train more teachers.

b. At present, GVT gives Rs.2500 per month to primary teacher and Rs.7500 per month to secondary level teachers as an incentive (not as salary). These teachers are graduate but not having B.Ed qualification which is mandatory to get permanent job as teachers. Since this amount paid as an incentive is very less and in addition to not having permanent job, more and more teachers leave this job within six months to eight months’ time.

c. All those who have qualification of B.Ed, will get government job to work as Vidhya Sahayak and they get fixed amount of Rs.5300 per month for next five years. Only after completion of five years they will get Rs.17000 per month as regular salary from government. [ This is as per govt. Rule]

My solution to address the problem of non-availability of teachers is as follows:

i. GVT must increase incentive amount of Rs.2500 to minimum Rs.5000 for primary teachers and put two conditions for teachers before recruiting them as teachers in the school. First condition for teacher should be to take their written commitment from them to complete B.Ed qualification. With the help of GVT, all teachers will get enrolled in govt. approved, two years course of Ambedkar University to complete B.Ed. It will cost Rs.5000 but GVT should provide this fellowship so that poorly paid teachers can reduce their financial burden. Second condition should be to undergo specially designed course by GVT for all those B.Ed teachers to attend15 day course to clear ‘Teachers Eligibility Test’ (TET). It will cost approximately Rs.100 per day per teacher and every year, batch of 20 teachers can be trained by GVT. This will help teachers to get B.Ed qualification and it will also help them to clear TET which is mandatory for permanent job of teacher and after completing five years, they will be eligible for salary of Rs.17000 per month. This entire process will ensure availability of qualified teachers having permanent jobs in local schools. (Please remember as stated earlier, we need urgently 310 teachers). GVT will have to undertake handholding support so that it can resolve this problem of teachers. This will be possible only if Asha for Education is providing adequate donation to GVT. Details of the amount required for addressing this problem is mentioned in Annexure 1.

**3. VISIT TO VILLAGE ‘VASTI KHANBALI’ FOR BICYCLE PROJECT – GIRL CHILD EDUCATION.**

Village Khanbali is three kilometre away from Vagara town. GVT has donated 10 bicycles in this village. During my visit, 8 girls were present in the school waiting for me. It was holiday but they were happy to come and discuss about their education and personal problems. From my discussion with all of them, I came to know about following status of bicycle project.

a. Bicycle project is very good project and is extremely helpful for poor girls in many villages.

b. Khanbali village has a population of 1800 people. There are still around 25-30 girls from poor families who needs bicycle so that they can go to school at Vagara. At the current cost of Rs.3250/- per one bicycle, Asha for Education will have to donate minimum Rs.65000/- for donating at least 20 bicycles in this village. Earlier 10 bicycles are already donated and therefore poor girls are having expectations from Asha for Education to receive more bicycles for this village.

c. As a matter of fact, only in Vagara taluka’s 23 villages, (not in Bharuch district) we need minimum 25-30 bicycles per village for girls of poor families so that they can go for education in these schools. Not having bicycle to travel average 3-7kms distance is one of the major reason why girl child is unable to get education in this rural area.

d. It was also observed that why poor boys are discriminated? They too need bicycles for going to schools for further education. Asha for Education should extend this project for poor boys also.

I suggest Asha for Education should scale up this project for entire Vagara taluka’s 23 villages and also include poor boys. There is immediate requirement of bicycles for 300 girl child. It means Asha for Education should arrange donation of Rs.10lacks immediately.

**4. VISIT TO LAKHI VILLAGE FOR SUPPORT A CHILD PROJECT (SAC)**

We visited Lakhi village and reached at the residence of Ex-Surpanch Mr. Manharbhai. I met students and parents and had detail discussion about this project. This village is 8 km away from Dahej town. I met first beneficiary of SAC, his name is Kalpesh Patel. He is studying in Diploma in Chemical at K.J. Polytechnic Bharuch. We have started financial support to him since last 5 years. GVT gave Rs.20,000 per year for his education during standard 10-11 and 12th respectively. Currently, GVT provides him financial support of Rs.40,000 per year which includes college fees plus hostel fees. However, I have observed that this amount is not adequate his total expenditure works out to be Rs.1,20,000/- for two years and he gets only Rs.80,000/- thus, it is difficult for him to survive and manage for remaining Rs. 40,000. Kalpesh expressed his desire to study further because diploma is not sufficient to get better job. He wants to go for degree in BE-part time. But he is worried about its cost of Rs.1.5lacs for three years. GVT has assured him to look into this matter.

I had also an opportunity to interact with Mr. Lakshmanbhai (parent) whose son Mr. Mithesh Lakshmanbhai Goyal as well as Ms. Krishnaben Goyal both were provided financial support under this project. He confessed honestly that without SAC project both his son and daughter would not have completed their education as his financial condition is very poor. According to him there are many more such parents in this village who needs financial assistance under SAC project so that their children can get better education.

For SAC project my recommendations to Asha for Education as well as GVT are as follows:

a. We must, as a pre-condition insist from each student that they will have to complete minimum degree qualification (diploma is not sufficient). Funds will not be available otherwise. To get better job, this pre-condition is most essential. Just diploma does not help them in future for their growth & advancement in their employment. It is implied that Asha for Education should increase their donation amount and extent criteria of SAC project for acquiring degree qualification in the interest of poor students.

b. Asha for Education should sponsor special batch of 20 girls to complete one year nursing course which is offered at Bharuch. It can cost approximately Rs.3000 per month and jobs are available immediately. Approximate total cost for providing fellowship to 20 girls works out to be Rs.7,20,000/- per year. It is possible for GVT to undertake this project immediately as many girls are willing to become nurse but due to their financial constraints they are deprived of education as well as job.

**5. VISIT TO VILLAGE LUARA**

We visited village Laura and met Mr. Dalpat Patel aged 24. He has received Rs.25,000/- per year for three years for doing diploma in Electrical. Currently he is on contract job (not with the company) earning only Rs.7000/- per month which is very less salary. He can get more salary provided he completes BE part time (expenses of Rs.1.5lacs) but he does not have financial resources. GVT may help him provided Asha for Education arranges for donations for such fellowships for further study.

Due to holiday, we could not meet any more people. However, the objective of my visit was fulfilled.

**6. CONCLUSION:**

GVT is doing excellent work. However, considering on-going 15 projects and possibilities of adding few more projects, I have observed that Mr. Rameshbhai needs able managers to whom he can delegate specific responsibilities of various projects. He needs to build a team of powerful and dedicated people at senior level. In spite of advance intimation and confirmation from him, I could meet very few people, mainly because I found him alone, single handedly shouldering many responsibilities at a time. As regards Asha for Education is concerned they must increase their donation amount by 50-60% so that GVT can meet current demand for Support a Child project as well as bicycle project.

A brief summary of suggested projects and amount required for the next years’ projects for Asha for Education is provided to Annexure 1. Annexure 2 indicates the details received from Mr. Rameshbhai about disbursement of the donation amount and Annexure 3 has few photographs taken during my visit.

I take this opportunity to thank Ms. Madhumeeta S. Shridhar and Mr. Rameshbhai for giving me this opportunity to undertake volunteer work for this project. I will be very happy to extend such volunteering work in near future too.

Ajay Dixit

Ahmedabad.

23rd October, 2013

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| **SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED PROJECTS Sr. No.**  | **Project/Activities**  | **Amount in Rs.**  |
| 1.  | **Training & Educating teachers in Vagara Taluka** a. Incentive amount given by GVT to be increased from 2500 to 5000 for 20 teachers (5000\*20=1,00,000) b. GVT to provide one time fellowship of Rs.5000/- per teacher for 20 teachers to attain B.Ed degree through Ambedkar University (20\*5000=1,00,000) c. GVT to conduct 15 days course for eligible teachers to appear for TET which is mandatory to get permanent job for teachers (20teachers \*100 per day\*15 days=Rs.30,000)  | 1,00,000 1,00,000 30,000  |
| 2  | **Girl child education – bicycle project** a. Under bicycle project Asha for Education should provide donation for 300 bicycles (Rs3250 per bicycle \* 300 = 9,75,000)  | 9,75,000  |
| 3  | **Support a Child project (SAC)** a. Asha for Education to offer 30 fellowships to poor students. Half of it should be reserved for providing fund for attending degree level education (Rs.50,000 per year per student for diploma study and Rs.1.5lacs per student for attending degree level education (Rs.50,000\*15=7,50,000) + (Rs.1,50,000 \* 15 = 22,50,000) = Rs.30,00,000 b. Fellowship to girl child for nursing course for 20 girls every year. (Rs.36000 per girl \* 12 months\* 20 girls = Rs.7,20,000)  | 30,00,000 7,20,000  |
| 4  | Total  | **49,25,000\***  |
| \* **Round figure (Rs.50,00,000) donation**  |

Annexure 1