

Gram Vikas Trust Site Visits

April 24th & April 26th 2020

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Snapshot of the Visit:

Visit Summary:

- This was a virtual site visit conducted through Zoom. It was scheduled at 6:00 PM IST on 24th and 26th to let the other Asha volunteers join too.
- The site visit on 24th was for the bicycle program and on the one on 26th was for the Support A Child (SAC) program.
- The project coordinators, Ms. Jaypriya and Ms. Vineta facilitated the site visits by calling the beneficiaries to a common location for the video call.
- GVT founder and director, Ramesh Kasondra, also attended the meetings.
- 6 bicycle program beneficiaries were interviewed briefly on 24th. 5 Asha Atlanta volunteers join the site visit.
- 6 SAC program beneficiaries were interviewed briefly on 26th, of which 3 were called to GVT office and 3 joined remotely.
- Both the site visits went on for about an hour each.

Impression

- Dedicated and thoughtful work by GVT on various aspects of education, livelihood, and health care in villages around Bharuch in the time of COVID pandemic.
- Last years' beneficiaries of the bicycle program satisfied and happy
- Beneficiaries of the SAC program grateful for the support by GVT and Asha, aiming at bigger things in life.

Background

Gram Vikas Trust was founded in 2001 and its aim is to help improve the social and economic conditions of the population in drought prone Bharuch and Narmada districts of Gujarat through education.

The three GVT projects being funded by Asha are:

1. Bicycle Program: GVT is providing bicycles to village girls after they pass 6th/7th grade so that they can travel 2-4 kms to attend high school in the nearest town so that they do not drop out due to safety concerns and inconvenience.
2. Support A Child (SAC) program: GVT provides scholarships to the students wanting to continue study beyond 12th standard. Scholarships typically cover college tuition and other fees.
3. Vocational training program (Not supported by Asha in year 2020-21 due to lack of funds): GVT provides driving lessons, handicraft, sewing, and beautician training to underprivileged

youth and girls in remote coastal villages of Vagra block of Bharuch district to make them financially independent. – This program is current

Bicycle Program Beneficiary Interaction.

We met six bicycle program beneficiaries who were called to Raisingpura school for the site visit. Harilal, the school teacher, had identified the beneficiaries to be called. In this pandemic time, the in-person schools had reopened for 6th to 8th standard students in the Months of September to October. The schools for 9th and beyond were open until early Feb before the 2nd wave of COVID took over. When the schools were shut, the teachers used to go to the location of the children and do street teaching in open spaces. Not all students had the means to learn from online courses. Hence, projector / TV screens were arranged at different locations to let such students continue education. Bicycle beneficiaries used their bicycles in this period to go to such locations. For the older students, though the classes were online, they were asked to appear for the exams in-person.

The beneficiaries called for the visit were Priyanshi, Jayshree, Anjali, Tejal, and two girls named Saraswati. Priyanshi is in her 7th grade, and the rest are in their 6th grade. They came from Pad, Khalak, and Dhabhal villages. All these girls have to travel anything between 4 to 6 km to go to school. This could have taken them about 30 – 40 minutes on foot, but with the bicycles, they are able to cover the distance in just 7 – 10 minutes. All these girls got their bicycles from GVT last year. Some of the girls also use the bicycle to go to their farms. They learnt riding the bicycles either from their father or elder siblings.

SAC Beneficiary Interaction

Interaction with 6 SAC beneficiaries was arranged: Chintan, Viral, Yash, Priyanka, Megha, and Tanushree. Chintan, Viral, and Yash came to GVT office for the interaction, whereas the others joined remotely.

Chintan from Karela village is in his 2nd year pursuing B.Tech in Petroleum engineering. GVT supports about 50k of 86k/year of tuition. He wants to do a masters study after finishing bachelors. Viral from Sachan village is in his 4th year of BHMS (Homeopathy). GVT supports 60k out of the 80k/year of tuition. His sister was also a SAC beneficiary. He want to MD after finishing BHMS. Yash from Bharuch proper is in his 2nd semester of BBA and is doing a business on the side. His 25k/yr tuition fees is fully covered by GVT.

Priyanka from Ankleshwar is in her 2nd year of MBBS and is currently interning in Ahmedabad. Her tuition fees is 7.85 Lakh/yr, of which GVT is supporting 25k/yr. She has applied for other scholarships too and is mostly managing through her father's support and a student loan. She is also planning on MD later. Megha is in her 4th/final year of BSC nursing in Vadodara. Her internship is in COVID ICU. GVT supported half of the tuition fees in the 1st and 2nd year, and supported fully in 3rd year. The tuition fees is 90k/yr. She wants to do MSC in nursing after this. Tanushree from Ankleshwar is in her 2nd year pursuing BSC Chemistry. Her 35k/yr tuition fees is covered by GVT. She is planning on doing MS in Analytical Chemistry after this.

All the applicants seemed happy about their education. All of them said that they would like contribute back in the future to GVT to support more students like them.

Concluding Remarks

GVT is doing a good job on all fronts even during these difficult times. It also did relief work to help the economically weak section survive during the lockdown. It was involved in spreading awareness about the

pandemic and distributed masks and sanitizers to the village homes. Overall, GVT's role in the region is impressive.

Photos:



1. A couple of Bicycle program beneficiaries in Raisingpura



2. A couple of SAC beneficiaries at GVT Office