

Nishtha night shelter report:

We visited the night shelter after returning to Baruipur from the rural interiors. I saw the same building for night shelter which me and Padmanava da visited in 2015 December. Some of the kids were grown up now, and some new faces. There were 22 students, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls.

Some of the mothers also came to meet us. They expressed their gratitude for the support and requested us to continue our efforts in the future.

Next, the teachers asked us to interact with the students about their academics. They showed us how they use marbles to teach mathematics, teaching addition and subtraction (the group was about class 2-3), and then one of the kids recited the multiplication table for 9, and I asked him to do it for 7, which he did. I asked for 12, which the student fumbled - the teacher stepped in saying they have taught till 10 for multiplication tables.

There were other students in the adjacent room drawing - ranging from class 4 to class 8. Some of the students were drawing on a notebook which was new - which seemed a little unusual that they would be using a new drawing book - in general they should be regularly having the drawing lessons.

The schedule currently runs as follows: The children come to the shelter in the morning, before going to school. After school, they return to the shelter where they are under the supervision of the teachers till late night. Mina di told something about children cannot stay at night (or was it just boys cannot stay at night- it was not clear to me when I was visiting the shelter in Dec 2017) There was something about a law by the district magistrate or DM- and hence the children were kept there for the evening and taken away late at night as Nishtha cannot keep them there. The mothers were supposed to take the children after they were done with their business around 12 midnight or 1am

After this, the teachers and children wanted to show some of the extra curricular activities they had learned - first they danced to a song "phule phule dhole dhole" (5 students). Two other students performed a Bihu dance, and the first five joined in later. The song performance involved 11 students. Since pictures are not allowed to be taken at the night shelter (advised by Asha Atlanta coordinator), we do not have pictures of the students.

One of the dance teachers, Papri, introduced herself as former student of Nishtha Jagaran. She is currently pursuing MA. The music teacher came up and spoke to us. She has been associated with the Night Shelter from its inception. Two other teachers, who are responsible for the boys at the Night Shelter, Shonku and Somenath Naskar, also mentioned that they are former students of Nishtha. They have completed graduation and now are teachers with Nishtha.

Inputs from Sarmistha:

We went to the Night Shelter around evening. Children of sex workers are given shelter here who otherwise have to spend the night on the road. But I learnt that these children need to go

back at night for sometime now due to some government regulation. I am a bit skeptical about the night shelter as I although I saw many kids drawing, all were drawing on the first page of a drawing book. These kids also performed dance and songs for us.



