

# **Nishtha - Site-visit Report**

by

**Abhyuday Mandal**

**(1)**

This was my third visit to Nishtha. I visited them on Dec 21, 2007 and it was a surprise visit. I called them in the morning. That day, I did not visit the night shelter, but visited another field office of Nishtha, where the children of the red light area were having a day's out. The most impressive thing was the free mingling of the kids of red light area with the other kids of the village. Below you can see how they are having a picnic together and among other, the sex workers are present there as well. They wanted me to join them as well, unfortunately I could not do that.



**(2)**

The moment I reached there, I was very warmly greeted by 40-50 kids who were pulling my hands, legs, shirt and bag to make me sit among them! Then they started showing something they had prepared - see the pictures below. There are nice captions written in Bengali – “It is my village and I have the responsibility...”, “I myself can change my situation” etc.







(3)

Notice below how all the kids from the entire village are sitting together. They also performed some cultural functions and I have some snaps of that.





















(4)

In the pictures below, Mina-di is showing the kids their own photographs I took during my last visit to them. They were all so excited to see their photographs, and you can see, how keen they were to get photographed.

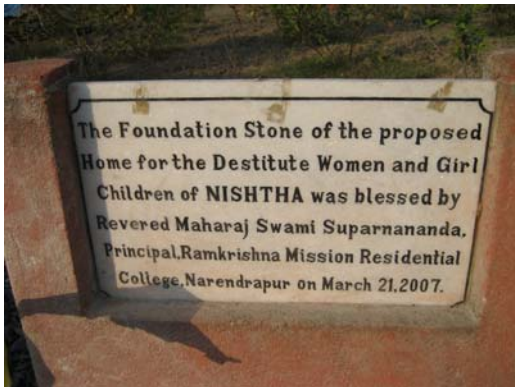






(5)

I also visited a home for destitute women and girl children, under construction – I was told that Asha for Education had sent some funds (I believe it was 3000\$) for its construction.



**(6)**

In summary, I am quite impressed with the work Nishtha is doing. I could visibly see the improvement of cleanliness of the environment where the sex-workers live with their kids. I strongly recommend that we continue supporting them, particularly for the food given at the night shelter. Remember that this food is the incentive to bring the kids to the shelter and keep them away from the doom atmosphere of their home at night.

This year, via an online community, I befriended someone who lives in Baruipur area, where Nishtha is located. So I asked for his opinion about them. This is what he wrote:

“Nistha has been set up in Baruipur, suburbs of Kolkata, in 1975 with a aim to have a society with every child getting proper education. NISTHA ventures in various fields. It stretches hands for the underprivileged children extending support for their health, hygiene and education.

After visiting Nistha for the first time, what I found is, Nistha is trying to go one step further in its field. Rather than just supplying some study materials to the children of this area, Nistha is also trying to set up some study circle to help these children who can't effort private tuition. What struck me most about Nistha was their work on the children of red light area of Baruipur. They are now going to local schools regularly, and Nistha has also built up night shelters for them. My experience with Nistha was definitely unique and an eye opener. It gave me several new perspectives on child education and the state of the poor children, specially the children of red light areas of our country. ”