

Prayas Field Visit Report by Priyanka Agarwal – 14th May 2025

This is short report on field visit conducted in Prayas Vocational Institute, Jhalana Doongri, Jaipur on Wednesday, 14th May 2025 during regular school hours. The visit was coordinated by Ms. Sathya Sengathir along with the Principal of the Integrated School. Both were present throughout the visit & offered a detailed tour of the campus & facilities. They shared details around the Integrated as well as special schools activities, insights into vocational programs and other initiatives undertaken by the school.

Structure of the Visit

Ms Sathya provided the overview of the schools & programs run in Prayas along with few operational details like staffing etc. It was followed with 15-20 mins discussions with few parents of regular as well as special needs kids. After that we visited the entire facility & interacted with the students & teachers present in the classrooms. Also got a chance to witness the quality of meals provided to kids as part of subsidized Mid-day meal program run by Government of Rajasthan.

Overview of the Facility

- The main building is a four-story structure comprising classrooms, vocational training rooms, therapy rooms for children with special needs, a library, computer lab, staff rooms, storage areas, and an open ground.
- An annex building houses additional classrooms, a fully functional bakery unit where selected students & their guardians learn baking skills (cookie & cake making) and a kitchen for basic culinary education & other related activities like cutting/ chopping, packing lunchboxes and delivery to nearby offices.
- Prayas runs a school for children with special needs, Integrated School for kids from underprivileged sections of the society, Diploma and B.Ed. programs in intellectual disability along with vocational training programme in the same premises. These programs are scheduled at different times to meet the needs of all students efficiently.

Infrastructure & Resources

- Classrooms are clean, spacious, and well-ventilated, with plenty of learning materials on the walls.
- The library houses a variety of subject-related books and few computers.
- Clean drinking water available on all floors & decent quality mid- day meal is provided to all school kids
- Therapy rooms are equipped with minimally required machines and learning aids.
- The school operates two buses, a minivan, and a few auto-rickshaws for student transport.
- Bakery & Kitchen for training selected students
- Enough parking space outside the building & easy approachable location

Student Demographics

- Special School: 120+ children with special needs. Every class has one coordinator who leads all activities for that class.
- Integrated School: 153 regular students and 20 children with special needs
The funding proposal has been submitted specifically for the Integrated School.
The Integrated School runs from Prep to Grade 8. Post Grade 8, efforts are made to help students transition into private or government schools under the Rajasthan Board. The school also seeks sponsorships or private funding to support these students. Additionally, students are encouraged to join vocational training programs offered by the school to help them become self-reliant.

Activities & Vocational Training

Ms. Sathya provided an overview of the school's history and ongoing efforts to support the students. The school is continually exploring new ways to train children and their families for financial independence. Few that I observed are:

- **Vocational trainings** like candle & soap making, cards, coasters bags, sewing etc. Prayas regularly exhibits all items in exhibitions outside the school as well.
- **Bakery operations:** Training students and selected parents to bake and sell cookies, with a long-term goal of helping them open their own shops.

- **Tiffin services:** Preparing and delivering lunch boxes to nearby offices, based on demand. Senior students and alumni help manage kitchen tasks and deliveries.

Community Outreach

Prayas runs community bal clubs, & conducts sports events & vocational trainings. They are engaged in holistic education that includes education, healthcare, access to government subsidies & skill development.

Also, as part of its community outreach efforts, the school conducts annual surveys during spring and summer breaks. Teachers go door-to-door in underprivileged neighborhoods in Jaipur to raise awareness about education—especially for children with special needs. This initiative has proven effective in increasing student registrations and enrollments.

Key takeaways from the visit:

- Spent approximately 2.5 hours at the school, interacting with Ms. Sathya, the principal, teachers, students (from both the Integrated and Special Schools), and B.Ed. and Diploma students.
- Interacted with teachers, support staff, kitchen staff, security personnel, and the speech therapist. Every class was active, well-managed, fun with a good mix of shy and outgoing students.
- Also interacted with few parents of both regular and special needs students for 15–20-minute interactive session. Parents shared positive feedback about the school, emphasizing notable behavioral improvements in their children since joining Prayas, especially compared to their experience in previous schools. They appreciated the individualized development plans created by teachers based on each student's unique needs.
- One particularly impressive aspect was that the Principal Sir knew every student by name and could recall their academic progress since joining the school. I asked some of the students a few questions related to their current lessons, and most were able to answer confidently.
- School has individual learning plan for each student depending on their potential & progress.
- Average class attendance stands at 80–85%, and school maintains strict attendance policy. They counsel parents from time to time encouraging them to send their kids regularly to the school.
- All regular students come from low or no-income households, and parents confirmed that no fees are charged. The school provides everything, including mid-day meals.

Additional details can be found in the school's annual report.

Attached below are some pictures from my field visit.











