GRAVIS

I visited GRAVIS, Jodhpur, Rajasthan on behalf of Asha for Education. I was accompanied with my wife Dr Claire J Glendenning, senior adviser (science & technology), Australian High Commission in India and sister in law Dr Madelaine Florin, an agriculture scientist in Wageningen University, Netherlands. They are hydrologist, agriculturist and environmentalist thus had wished to visit works of GRAVIS in desert-land.

I visited the works of GRAVIS given below.

- Rain Water Harvesting Structures (TANKA & NADI)
- Community Hospital & Health Camps for poor villagers
- Asha Education Centres
- School established by GRAVIS and now run by local village community successfully
- Self Help Groups (SHG)
- Pastures
- Family Vegetable Gardens in desert land
- Village Information Centre

TANKA, NADI & SHG

Tanka is a water body which is a basic and most important water body for a family in desert villages.

Nadi is a water body used by the local community in desert villages.

Asha for Education supports these works.

Water is the most basic priority in this region, kids start to carry water supporting their mothers than to go school. The construction of TANKA for a family gives opportunity for kids to go school.

GRAVIS motivates formation of SHGs (Self Help Groups) for women & economy empowerment. Water is a responsibility of women, many areas they go 5 to 10 kilometers or more for water for daily domestic uses.

NAADI the water source of the community of the THAR desert
Women take loan from their groups to construct TANKA or to buy goats/ sewing machine/ water to fill TANKA.

Members of the SHGs meet periodically to discuss local issues related to them. I saw passbooks of some SHGs they were having good accounts and significant savings.

The best thing I saw women feel confident and enjoy local leadership. They were holding registers with them in well managed file and register folders. It was very natural, they were talking with confidence.

Community Health

GRAVIS has been running a well equipped community hospital to serve local communities. There are ambulances, health training centre, medicine store, residential campus for staff and laboratories in the campus of the community hospital.

GRAVIS organizes medical camps in villages periodically.

Asha for Education supports medical camps.
Asha Education Centres
GRAVIS runs many education centers for the children of local communities, few of these centers are supported by Asha for Education.

Self-sustained education system by local community motivated by GRAVIS

There is a big achievement for GRAVIS. GRAVIS started an education center some years before. GRAVIS started to motivate local villagers for taking responsibility of the center. Now the center is run and managed by the local village community. They charge nominal monthly fee to pay salaries of the teachers.

I met students of this center, they were confident and disciplined. I was very impressed by the shoes management, daily students come and leave their shoes in a line, it is really beautiful in the harsh life of desert. I asked questions to students and they replied without a hesitation. They learn music and local games.

I requested GRAVIS to continue with these type experiments, I request to Asha for Education to support this type of experiments it is a self-sustained local community education process.
Family Vegetable Garden:
GRAVIS encourages family vegetable small scale gardens to grow vegetables to reduce cost of living. GRAVIS has a dream for minimum one vegetable garden for each family in the area.

Community Pastures:
GRAVIS establishes community pastures for the poor section of the local community. These community pastures are only for poor section of the local community for availability of food for their cattle.
Village Information Center:

GRAVIS runs village information centers as community knowledge and information centers for state and central government policies, newspapers and magazines. I could not have seen the center because key person had gone to any emergency work and forget to give keys in the home. GRAVIS gives responsibility of keys to a village family residing near to the village information center.

Photos
Site Visit Report for Asha for Education
by
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