GRAVIS site visit on Nov 2019

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Overview

The visit took place over two and a half days (Nov 16 - Nov18) in November, 2019. The objective of this trip is to visit areas where GRAVIS work for programs funded by Asha for Education and experience the impact first-hand. Following is a brief of the beneficiaries/places visited.

Day 1 - November 16, 2019 | Gravis center: Gagadi (District - Jodhpur, Rajasthan)

Gravis coordinators:
Rahul Mishra Ji: Program coordinator.
Ramesh Ji: Gagaadi center coordinator.
Khemsing ji: Field coordinator
Ambaram Ji: Driver

Timeline of the day

- Picked up from Jodhpur city by Rahul Ji and Ambaram Ji early morning to go to Gagaadi center of GRAVIS which oversees programs funded by Asha for Education.
  - Gagadi center is very thoughtfully constructed. It’s a beautiful green campus with facilities coordinators to stay and host guests and a training center for Gravis to host programs like Taanka maintenance training. It also has a school on campus.
• We visited the school at the center.
  ○ This school is located on Gagadi campus and provides education until 8th standard. Campus also has a place for the teachers to stay.

• Left for the site visit around 9:30 am.

• Then we met a khadin beneficiary (constructed in 2014-2015). The beneficiary told us how it has helped him succeed in Farming even with less/more than needed rain. They also grew watermelons and gave us one to taste. They looked very pleased and gratified with the work GRAVIS has done for them.

• Visited a primary school (until 4th std) funded by GRAVIS. This school has two rooms and provides education to kids until class 4.
  ○ It was good to see that the classrooms were packed but at the same time raises questions if we have enough capacity to allow more students to study. Overall kids seemed educated and confident. School had two teachers, one male and one female. Both were happy teaching kids.
  ○ Kids recited poems, songs, English alphabets and one brave kid solved difficult math problem.
However there is scope for more basic work to be done in this school. I observed that there's no electricity connection and students were studying in dim light conditions. One of the teachers told me that the other problem in summer’s heat. Since school doesn’t have a fan, it becomes really tough to sit in the classrooms.

Students of Class 3-4 combined

Probably the youngest in the class, took on the challenge thrown by the teacher to solve math problems.
New student in the class :)
• Visited taanka (constructed in 2013-2014) and kitchen garden beneficiary, Ilki Devi.
  ○ She seemed very happy with the support she's received over the years. She gave us some lemons and a miniature version of pomegranate which were grown in her kitchen garden helped planted by GRAVIS.

![A Taanka beneficiary.](image1)

![Pomegranate tree from her kitchen garden. The idea of kitchen garden is to supplement food requirements for the family.](image2)

• Visited another taanka (constructed in 2018-2019) beneficiary and learnt about some of their pre-tanka construction time problems. The beneficiary family told us that they were getting water from a neighbor's taanka and had less authority since they didn't own it. But ever since they owned their own taanka, water was always within reach. Since they didn't have pakka makan the catchment area was built to channel water into the taanka.
Daali with her husband, Dharmaram, her kid and her Taanka.

Daali’s house. Since the house is not a “Pakka Makaan” the catchment area for the Taanka is built around with sloped structure.
We also saw an under construction Taanka. This beneficiary has a pakka makaan hence they plan to connect Taanka with roof for water catchment.

Taanka under construction.

Taanka beneficiary.
- Visited a self help group which taught young women/girls sewing clothes.
  - Most of the participants were girls passed out of school. They learnt how to make salwar kurta and other dresses. I bought one :).  

- We met another women self help group where women contribute some small amount of money every month towards a common pool, which can be loaded to one of the contributors to buy/invest.  

- Then we met a couple of village development groups.

Here, most of the VDC members were present except the women who had left a few mins before and couldn't join us. It was good to know that the beneficiary was given priority purely based on need and financial status.

- Next day, on the way to Kalron, we visited a school in Utaambar for which a toilet was constructed. Since it was an off day we could meet students. We took some pictures of the toilet that was built last year, met one of the teachers and a student that resided nearby and was available at that time.

Ladies toilet.
Day 2 - November 17, 2019 | Gravis center : Kalron (District - Jodhpur, Rajasthan)

Gravis coordinators for the day:
Rahul Mishra Ji: Program coordinator
Ambaram Ji: Driver
Surender Ji: Center coordinators from Kalron center.

Timeline of the day
- Started from Gagadi center around 8am and reach Kalron center by 9:30.
- Just for information, Gravis center in Kalron runs projects which are NOT funded by Asha for education. All the programs funded by Asha for Education are directed only from Gagadi center.
- Here we visited naadis which provides drinking water for multiple villages.

A naadi that supports 3 villages around it. People from these villages donate labor in summer to clean the whole area. It was great to witness the cleanliness maintained around the naadi.
Another naadi.

- Visited beneficiaries of Parivartan project. Families under this project are provided with Taanka, a horticulture unit to grow food for self and bicycles to girl students. Following are some of the photographs taken from these visits.

A beneficiary under parivartan project standing in her kitchen garden. Second picture shows the taanka her family has received.
Crew that took me to all these places. Grateful to them for taking out time to show all the great work they do.

From left to right, Rahul Ji, Gordhan ji, Narayan Ji, Ambaram Ji and Surender Ji.

Rani Ji and Ramesh Ji.

Dr Prakash Tyagi.
Third morning, before leaving for the airport, I met Dr Prakash Tyagi in Jodhpur GRAVIS office. It's commendable at the scale GRAVIS is working in India and the number of people they have helped so far.
Summarize improvements needed (Shared with Prakash ji)

- Even though the taankas are being built for each family, a common problem that surfaced was the tubewell/tanker water they used to refill their taankas. Rain water usually lasts less than 6 months and to refill it people pay for water tankers which gets their water from tubewells. The problem is that tubewell water is hard-water (khaara) and not drinkable directly. With consensus everybody said rain water is much better than ground water coming from tube wells. Some people complained about joint issues and connected it to hard water that they have to drink.

- Electricity in schools. The school I visited didn't have electricity connection. A teacher told me heat is a problem in summer and it becomes difficult to sit in school. Other problem due to lack of electricity is the brightness in the classrooms was low.

Some useful keywords and their meanings

Khadins- A khadin is traditional structure that serves as a method of collecting water by building an earthen embankment at the end of an upland plot of land to prevent water run-off.

Taanka (drinking water storage tanks)- This method for collecting water consists of a covered cylindrical tank with the capacity to store between 18,000 and 20,200 L of water.

Naadi (village ponds)- These village ponds are natural collections of rainwater which provide an open source of water to entire villages. A medium sized naadi provides a community with water for 2-6 months in a year of average rainfall, whereas big ones carry water all year round.

_________________________________________________________________________Thank you_________________________________________________________________________