Gravis Site Visit Report (September 6-7)

Date: September 6-7, 2025 ,
Organization: Gramin Vigyan Vikas Samiti (GRAVIS)
Project: Water, Health and Education for Women and Children of Thar
Attendees from Asha: Site Visited by Jayant
GRAVIS : Rahul Mishra (Project coordinator), Khem Singh (Field supervisor), local community members including taanka beneficiaries, and students at the school.

Goals of the Visit

- Interact with Taanka recipients, listen to their stories, perspectives, and understand the impact of water harvesting work carried out in their villages and homes through the Taanka project.

- Engage with students and teachers in two local schools supported by Asha and learn about the educational journeys of older children, as well as the impact of local health camps, including adolescent health programs.

- Visit GRAVIS Hospital, where eye surgeries were conducted, and meet with Dr. R.S. Chaturvedi to gain insights into cataract and glaucoma-related surgeries.

Sites Visited

1. Asha-supported schools: *Meenu ki Dhani Primary School, Bhakri Primary School*

2. Taankas: *Pabu Nagar Village, Bhikamkor Road, Kerlanada Road, Shiv Nagar*

3. Pabu Nagar and Bhakri Villages (sites of Community Health and Education Camps)

4. GRAVIS Hospital

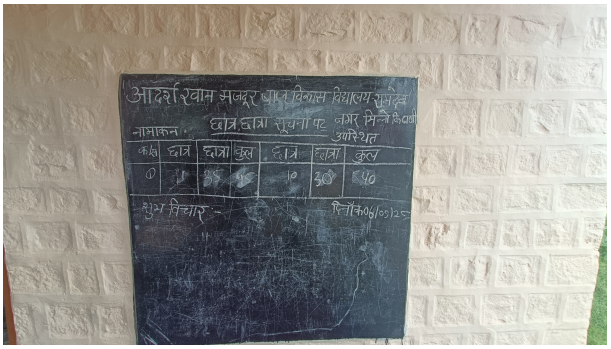
The site visit was conducted by Mr. Jayant Mohanty on behalf of Asha, accompanied by Mr. Rahul Mishra and Mr. Khem Singh from Gravis, on **September 6–7**. The visit commenced on the morning of September 6 and concluded in the evening of September 7.

The visit began with a meeting with Mr. Prakash Tyagi, who explained how the funds provided by Asha had been utilized. Following this, the team visited Meenu ki Dhani Primary School, located approximately two hours from Jodhpur.

Asha-Supported Schools

1. Meenu ki Dhani Primary School





The school is located in a small hamlet with about 30–40 houses nearby. Supported by Asha, it is situated in a remote area, several kilometers from the main road. The school consists of two classrooms and currently accommodates around **44–45 students** aged 5–10 years. Two teachers, Mr. Suresh and Ms. Munni Devi, have been teaching here for several years.

Classes are offered up to the 4th grade. After completing Grade 4, students transfer to nearby schools for higher education. The proximity of this school has significantly improved access to education for children in the area. Previously, children had to walk 3–5 km under harsh weather conditions, and many parents were reluctant to send them to schools. Now, almost all children from nearby hamlets attend school regularly.

The curriculum includes Hindi, English, and Mathematics, along with sessions on **health, hygiene, and cleanliness**, supported by GRAVIS program (Water, Sanitation, and Health). These sessions focus on clean drinking water, personal hygiene, and the importance of nutrition (vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, proteins, and fats).

During my interaction with the students, I observed that they could recite basic English poems, identify common English words, and solve complex multiplication and division problems. Despite limited space and combined teaching of Grades 1–2 and 3–4 due to infrastructural constraints, each student received individual attention.





2. Bhakri Primary School



Located a few kilometers from Bhakri village, this is the second school supported by Asha, with around **50 students** enrolled. The school has two teachers, Ms. Anita and Mr. Sanju. Compared to Meenu ki Dhani, the campus here is slightly larger, but the teaching pattern is similar, with students divided into two groups (Grades 1–2 and Grades 3–4).

The impact of Asha's support has been significant:

- **100% of students** from both schools continue to Grade 5.
- **Over 80% of students** complete up to Grade 10.

While Asha provides operational support, the local villagers contribute to the upkeep of the schools, including minor repairs and maintenance work such as painting and wall repair.



Taankas

During my visit, I had the opportunity to see **11–12 taankas** located in Bhakri village, Shiv Nagar, Pabu Nagar, and other nearby areas. These taankas were constructed in **2024–25 with funding support from Asha**. GRAVIS has built taankas in six villages under this initiative. The hamlets (dhanis) where these taankas are located are often far from any major village or town, with some situated in extremely remote areas without proper road access. Most of the residents in these communities belong to the **Bhils**, a marginalized tribal community in Rajasthan.

The taankas have made a **tremendous difference** in their daily lives. Earlier, families—especially women and children—had to walk **4–5 kilometers every day** to fetch water, which would take them **2–3 hours daily**. Children were often pulled out of school to help with this work, and women had little time left for other responsibilities. With the installation of taankas, families are now able to harvest and store rainwater that lasts them **6–8 months of the year**. This change has reduced their physical burden, given them more time to rest, and freed up energy for more productive activities.

The impact on education has been particularly noticeable. **Girls who previously spent hours fetching water now attend school regularly.** Families that once relied on expensive private water tankers—costing them ₹600–700 per trip—now save this money, as their water needs are largely met at home. Women, who earlier spent the majority of their day collecting water, can

now dedicate more time to caring for their children, managing household activities, and engaging in small-scale livelihood opportunities.

So far, **taankas** have been constructed in the six villages, each with a capacity of **20,000 liters**. GRAVIS has also put in place a system for **regular maintenance and cleaning every six months**, using *phatkiri* (alum) to ensure the stored water remains clean and safe for consumption. The introduction of these taankas has not only improved water availability but has also contributed to **better health, improved school attendance, and enhanced overall quality of life** for these remote communities.








दांका
पम्प
पादुगर, जोधपुर
2024-25
WHEWC Project






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2024-25
WHEWC Project

Health and Education / Awareness Camps

Adolescent health camps for girls and medical camps for the wider community have become **vital initiatives supported by Asha for Education**. These camps play a crucial role in addressing **seasonal health issues** such as flu, viral infections, and heat strokes, while also raising awareness about **personal hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition**. In such remote areas, where healthcare access is extremely limited, these camps provide essential check-ups and create awareness that has long-term positive effects on the community.

During the previous online visit, we had met two girls, **Pooja and Purnima**, who had attended the adolescent health camp. This time, I was pleased to learn that both are now pursuing higher education and completing their graduation. Pooja, in particular, has developed a strong interest in writing stories and aspires to become a writer. Along with them, **6–7 other girls from the village are also attending college together**, which would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

The **awareness created through these camps is transforming local mindsets**, especially with regard to girls' education. In the past, early marriages before the age of 18 were not uncommon, and families rarely supported higher education for girls. However, these camps have slowly shifted perspectives, and more families are now allowing their daughters to continue schooling and pursue college.

To complement health awareness, **skill-based training** has also been introduced: stitching classes for girls and vocational training for boys. These programs provide adolescents with practical skills that can support their future livelihoods. The adolescent girls' health camps are particularly well-attended, with young women actively participating and gaining confidence in discussing health issues openly. Alongside, **regular medical, health, and education-related camps** are being organized, ensuring that the benefits of awareness and healthcare reach all sections of the community.







Beneficiary from Eye Surgeries(Those Raising Hands) / Medical Camps



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GRAVIS Hospital – Eye Surgery Program

Asha has been providing support to GRAVIS Hospital for **cataract and eye surgeries**, which has brought immense relief to many rural families suffering from preventable blindness. During my visit, I had the chance to tour the hospital and personally interact with **Dr. R.S. Chaturvedi**, who has been leading these surgical interventions.

Dr. Chaturvedi kindly showed me the **operation theatre** where the surgeries are conducted, and explained in detail how the funds provided by Asha have been utilized. A portion of the funding has been directed toward **purchasing essential medical equipment** needed for conducting cataract and glaucoma surgeries. The doctor shared with me the records and photographs of many beneficiaries whose vision has been restored through these surgeries.

The impact of this support is deeply significant. For many patients in rural Rajasthan, loss of eyesight due to cataract had not only affected their personal independence but also reduced their families' earning capacity, as younger members had to dedicate time to caregiving. With successful surgeries, these individuals have regained their sight, allowing them to return to their daily lives, livelihoods, and social activities.

The partnership between Asha and GRAVIS in this initiative is not only addressing immediate medical needs but also contributing to **long-term socio-economic improvements** in the lives of rural communities. By restoring vision, the project has effectively restored dignity, independence, and hope to hundreds of families who otherwise would have continued to struggle silently with preventable blindness.


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