

SITE VISIT REPORT

Date of visit Dec 2025

Organization visited: Adharshila- a shelter home for underprivileged tribal people from the tribal district of Chittorgarh.

Name of the person visiting- Nehal Bandi

Name of the organization represented- Ashsha
home for underprivileged children in Gujarat.

Purpose of the visit:

- Meeting with the girls
- Meeting project team Mrs Suman Ji, teachers and other staff
- Experience and counsel on project health.

Name of the person met at the organization- Ms. Suman Chohan

Observations



The school continues to function out of the newer structure that was built after they had to leave the rented premises a few years ago. However, this building has only a tin roof, which leaks in several places during the monsoon. The interiors also remain somewhat dim due to insufficient natural light and a limited electricity supply.



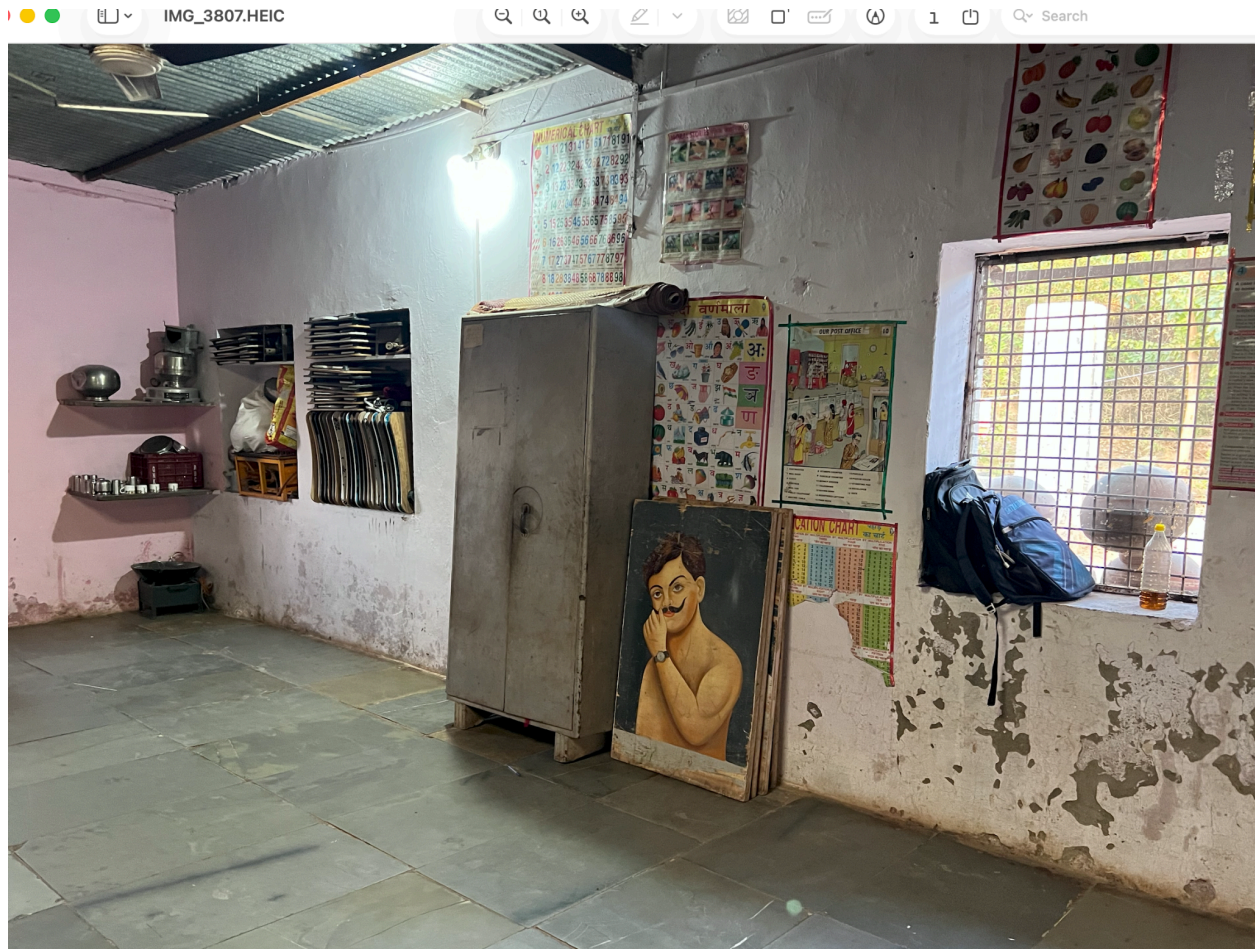
The girls put on a short open-air theatrical piece and I was struck by how well-crafted the dialogues and songs were, and by the spirited pace at which the entire performance unfolded. This group has, quite rightly, won awards for staging this play on earlier occasions. Approximately 9 students are gearing up for the Government board examinations at the class V/VI level in order to gain entry into KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Avasiya Vidyalaya). Upwards of 75 students who once studied at Aadharshila are now enrolled at Nahargarh KGBV and various other Government Senior Secondary schools, carrying forward their education.



The school appears to be adequately stocked with books, notebooks, and basic stationery. The reading materials and textbooks seem to be the same as those I observed during my previous visit. The school adheres to the state-prescribed syllabus while also incorporating an open, flexible curriculum inspired by the Eklavya Foundation.



The *Khaat Andolan*, spearheaded by Khemraj Choudhary over three decades ago, was a social uprising against the oppressive customs imposed by upper-caste groups on the tribal population of the region. Tribals and lower-caste Dalits were forbidden from wearing footwear while walking past the home of an upper-caste individual. Instead, they were expected (and in some areas still are) to carry their shoes on their heads in the presence of upper-caste people. In defiance, Dalits and tribals staged a protest by symbolically carrying their cots (*khaat*) and sitting on them right outside the homes of upper-caste community members. This became a defining moment in the history of Southern Rajasthan — one that not only united and empowered the tribal and Dalit communities but also brought widespread public attention to these deeply regressive practices. I believe these caste-driven customs partly explain the barefoot habits still seen among tribal children today.



The school hasn't really expanded in its methodology or scale and continues to work with the relatively small batch of girls, preparing and motivating them to get into middle school. This strategy of a bridge for first-generation learners has proven to be quite effective and is something that Aadharshila school under Suman Chouhan's able leadership is excelling at.



When the school first began in 2007, every single girl enrolled — some as young as seven — was already married. By 2020, not one of the 67 girls present is married. This is a truly remarkable accomplishment. It is an aspect of the school's impact that can easily go unnoticed, yet combating child marriage was one of the core motivations behind this initiative. I firmly believe that the relentless efforts of Suman Chouhan and Khemraj Choudhary over more than a decade have been instrumental in reversing this deeply entrenched practice.

A steady stream of visitors and organizations continue to come to the school, offering donations of clothing, supplies for the children, and other forms of support. A review of the visitors' log reveals that a group of postgraduate students, accompanied by their professor from the Karve Institute of Social Studies at the University of Pune, visited the school and penned highly appreciative remarks about its work and mission.

The school would greatly benefit from infrastructure upgrades — particularly fixing the roof and improving the lighting inside the main hall.

