

Site Visit Report - Hariksha Trust

I visited the learning center run by Hariksha Trust near Thiruvannamalai on 2nd March 2013, a Saturday. The center is not usually open on Saturdays but Ravi had organized a special class that day. So, I got a chance to observe the children and the staff. There are now a total of 44 children of which 28 are boys and 16 are girls. On the day of the site visit, 32 children were present. Several new caretakers and additional staff have been employed to care for the children.

Sujatha, Ravi's wife continues to function as a special educator. The other staff members I interacted with are:

Dinesh Babu - a physiotherapist who had been appointed recently

Sudha, Chithra & Shiarunbi - caregivers

Kamatchi & Shanthi - caretakers

Kumari - cook

Satheesh - driver

From my previous visits, I was aware that Hariksha sets documents three month goals and development milestones for every children in the center. They track these on a regular basis, document them and include them in the monthly and other reports they send out to donors. I went over all these documents and wanted to compare the most recent goals set and their current statuses for a few children. I did this by visiting each class, and interacting with a few children from each. During the physiotherapy session, I specifically enquired about the progress of Gowtham, Logeshwaran, and Gokul (whom I knew from my previous visits). I noticed a clear and quantifiable improvement in the mental and physical development of the children. The longer they have been with the center, better and faster their improvement, it seemed.

After interacting with the children and the staff, I went over some of Hariksha's financial records and cross-verified random accounts against bills and vouchers. Things seemed to be in order and well-documented. Once this was complete, we went over to visit the new building that was under construction. Most of the rooms were complete except the bathroom and one of the classrooms. Hariksha was waiting for funds to complete the construction.

Hariksha is being run efficiently, and continues to be of great value to the specially abled children it cares for. The center is functioning well, and the children are receiving good care and attention. The funds provided by Asha are being put to good use in the form of more trained staff and better infrastructure. There has also been an increase in the number of children that are attending the school. Continuing funds to Hariksha would help them provide continued and better care for the children that attend the school.

- Bhaskar, Asha Chennai volunteer (bhasve at gmail dot com).

PS: I did not intend to write a report when I visited them and so did not take any notes. Given that I am writing this report several months after the visit, there are a lot of specific details I am unable to recall.