

Project Name: Rescue Junction/Dobhi School - People First Educational Charitable Trust
Website: <http://peoplefirstindia.net/home>
Project Location: Gaya District, Bihar
Chapter: Asha for Education – Silicon Valley
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Project Proposal:

Rescue Junction/Dobhi School – Site Visit Report

3rd September, 2008

I reached Gaya station around 9:30 a.m. in the morning. I was received at the station by Deepak and about 20 kids from Rescue Junction. After talking to kids for a couple of minutes, we drove to Dobhi School which is about 25 kilometers from Gaya.

Here is a picture of the school taken from Deepak's cell phone.



We were greeted at the gate by the principal of the school. The school has classes from nursery to 10th standard. I saw the attendance registers for teachers and for each class. It was properly maintained. I went to the classrooms one by one. All the classes were full and teachers were teaching various subjects (Maths, Science, Literature etc) in each classroom. Each class had fair no of girl students. I have a hard copy of names of teachers and no of students in each class with me. Many of the class rooms has kuchcha roof and there are no toilets at the school.

We came back to PeopleFirst headquarters around noon where I met Nick who gave me a tour of the facilities there. PeopleFirst runs two vocational training courses from that facility (Gyan Vikas Centre): computer skills and Driving and vehicle maintenance. The computer course is recognized by National Institute of Open Schooling. Close cooperation with Jan Kshishan Sansthan which is recognized by HRD ministry allows People First to hold government approved examinations and issue government approved certification. Over 200 students have passed this course so far. I visited the room where the computer course was in progress and a student who had graduated from the course was teaching the course.

In another room, women health workers were doing some office related work. Nick told me that these women work with the women and young mothers in 12 villages concentrating on preventive health

care. People First also provides clinical services, and through the women's health group, over 14 Self Help Group have been established many of whom have already distributed loans for income raising initiatives. This project is fully funded by a group of doctors based in the UK.

I have hard copies of the newspaper reports about PeopleFirst's activities published in local and state level newspapers.

After lunch, we drove back to the Rescue Junction near Gaya Station. At the gate of the Rescue Junction, I was welcomed by two people - Akash Matur the Director of the Project who takes care of the center and Amit Kumar a teacher/ counselor. I saw the daily record book of all the activities that take place at the center. There is also a platform reporting book completed by the staff who visited the platform recording their activities and any other incidents etc. The center runs according to a daily routine that all kids present in the Rescue Junction follow. After a brief chat with Akash and Amit, I went to the class room where all (about 25 kids) were sitting on the floor. Some of them were writing first/2nd standard Maths on their slates. They all seemed very eager. Nick introduced me to couple of kids (Bhola and Tiger) who were going to go to a regular school. There were some girls (They usually hide their identity) in the class. After half an hour or so, it was time for kids to have lunch. Nick showed me the improvements that he wanted in the building (Please see the project proposal) to make the place more livable and more secure.



Another area that People First has done a commendable job is in taking care of minors who are brought to the Remand home for petty crimes. Nick and I visited the Remand home in Gaya and on the way to the Remand home, Nick described how much he had to fight to get the kids out of the old remand home that was in very bad shape. Also, due to People First's persistent efforts, there is a juvenile court that was opened in the remand home itself so that kids don't have to be taken to another court. I met the People First's child protection and legal officer, Mr. Manoj Kumar who seemed very knowledgeable. Next we visited the kids who are kept in different rooms by age. Many of these kids can go out as soon as their parent/legal guardian can show up in the court. Unfortunately, no one comes looking for some of these kids and they live in the remand home for years. Nick is taking legal steps that would allow Rescue Junction to become a receiver for these kids.

Conclusion

Asha for education should strive to work with People First in all relevant areas as possible.