

Site Visit Report of EK KADAM Project By Mayank Shukla

It was my first visit to Apna Ghar (Ek Kadam) after it shifted to new premises at



Tatiyaganj in Kanpur. I had earlier visited the residential home for migrant labor boys being run by Mahesh at Nankari near IIT Kanpur. There were familiar faces among the old students. However meeting with new students and listening to their experiences was of much interest to me. At present there are 24 students. As I entered the campus several surprises awaited me. There were amenities which we could have not thought of a year ago when the new building was not there. After spending a day and night

there on 26 January, 2014 i felt the promise of a better life and equal opportunity now has a meaning.

The student rooms were large enough, neat and clean with beds for 4 of them and proper place to keep their books and self study. This was altogether different from the earlier set up. The lack of playing space has also been taken care of. In the evening i could see students playing cricket and badminton. In the near future more sports facilities can be added and the open space developed. The squeaky clean kitchen with a large dining hall can now take care of more students if the strength goes up in near future. I was told most of the vegetables now do not come from the open market but are grown in the field within campus using organic methods and water saved through rain water harvesting.

In the computer room there were students working on the internet and some of them busy drawing shapes of all colors and sizes. The Apna Ghar blog is managed by the students themselves and i could see one of them sending an email via Gmail. There are two desktops and 4



laptops as of now. A system will have to put in place for computer learning for all students.



The construction work at the premises is still in progress with new things being added. Library is almost complete with books waiting to be put in place. A new

The open house with students in the evening was interesting. We sat together to have an introduction, discuss 26 January, democracy and vote for the most popular Bollywood song among them. We had some funny moments during voting. The participation was

100 percent and the number of songs suggested exceeded the number of votes.

During night it was time for the weekly movie show with Mahesh struggling to run the old projector. An interaction with alumni of IIT K Ruchi Mishra who at present is doing her research at Ohio State University in USA via Skype also happened. She knew most of the old students. It was a truly interactive session where in students put forward their question to her and answered her questions. Everyone got an opportunity to



interact. After the discussion the need to develop a virtual classroom was felt where students and teachers from IIT or other institutes can interact with students and help them in their studies.

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