

Visit to Asha Darshan

By Ankur Bora

7011 W Parmer Lane , #1126 , Austin , TX 78729

(Tel) 5122582922 email : ankurbora@hotmail.com

Date- 10-2-08

Background : I heard about Asha Darshan and it's founder Ms Biju Borbaruah from Sanjeev Ranganathan in year 2006. Sanjeev was an Asha Austin volunteer and recently moved to India. Sanjeev talked about the dedication of Ms. Biju who has been working selflessly for the underprivileged children , men and women in a remote area of Assam. In between I also talked with Uttam Teron of Parijat Academy. Parijat project has been supported by a number Asha chapter and I coordinate regularly with Uttam. As per my suggestion , Uttam visited Asha Darshan in the year 2007. Uttam mentioned that he was moved by the efforts of Ms. Biju and others of Asha Darshan. I made up my mind to meet and visit Asha Darshan on my trip to India.

Meeting Biju Borbaruah at Parijat Academy : It was on 3rd January 2008 , I along with Asha Volunteer Satyajit Nath of Asha Seattle visited Parijat Academy located in Village Pamohi near Guwahati. We were also accompanied by Kaushik das of "AtmaNirbhar". At Parijat Academy we met Mr Jayanta Barman (retd. Engineer , Government of Assam) , Ms Meera Saikia (Social worker) and Ms Santana Sarmah (Advocate , Assam High court) . They are well wishers and governing body members of Parijat Academy. Biju Borbaruah came all the way from Tamulpur to meet us. While we were talking about the activities of Parijat , we also interacted with Biju on their work at Tamulpur. We were impressed knowing about the sincerity and dedication of Biju Borbaruah and decided to visit Asha Darshan.

Visit to Asha Darshan

Date: 23-01-2008



I had to cancel my visit to Tamulpur in the last minute as my father-in-law was admitted to Intensive care Unit that day for emergency operation. However Jayanta Barman, Meera Saikia , Santana Sarmah and Uttam Teron decided on the visit to Asha Darshan, Tamulpur, District Baksha , Assam on 23-01-2008. The following has been prepared based on their feedback.

It is approximately 5 hours journey from Guwahati to Tamulpur via Rangia by a local taxi. The place is very close to Eastern Bhutan Border and there was very strict army security all over the place because of the oncoming republic day. It was a rainy afternoon when we reached Asha Darshan at Tamulpur. We met there Ms Biju Borbaruah, and other volunteer of Asha Darshan. The team of Asha Darshan has been doing great work for underprivileged children of Tamulpur area. We were told that a number of women Self Help Groups have also been established. Asha Darshan often organizes Women Self Help Group meeting for better development and capacity building.

There are 11 Educational Centres running by Asha Darshan. Due to short time we could not visit to all of them. We had visited the following three.

1. Lakhinarayanpur Centre
2. Shantipur Centre
3. Satyanarayanpur Centre

All the center are far away from Asha Darshan office.

On 23-01-2008, the day was Netaji's Birthday and most of the schools closed around noon. As such we were able to meet the students at Lakhinarayanpur Center only. At Satyanarayanpur , we were able to meet the teachers.

1. Lakhinarayanpur Centre



- There are 154 children
- There is two section LP and ME
- There are 6 teachers

- School start from 9 am to 3 pm
- Number of male teacher is 5
- Total number of female teacher is 1
- Drinking Water scarcity is there
- Local population is Benagli, Nepali and Adibashi
- We observed that this center needs financial help for children desks and benches, writings materials like exercise books, pencils, erasers, sharpener etc.

2. Satyanarayanpur Centre

- There are two section LP and ME
- Total teacher population is 7
- Total male teacher is 6
- Total female teacher is 1
- We met the teacher there
- We did not meet the children on account of Netaji's Birthday holiday.
- We were told that Mid day meal is going on there
- Local population is Bengali, Assam, Nepali, Bodo and Adibashi
- This center also need help for children desks and benches and writings materials

2. Shantipur Centre



- We reach in this center very lately, so we did not see teacher and children.
- Local population is Bengali, Boro, Nepali and Adibashi
- School is made of tin roof, bamboo and mud wall.

Vocational Training



On our way back we saw Bagajuli center of Asha Darshan. This is a center where Asha Darshan conducts vocational training for women. Asha Darshan also owns the land. They have a long term plan for Som Tree Plantation for Muga Silk rearing, weaving, cutting knitting and embroidery.

We felt that there is a lot of potential for vocational, cottage, food processing unit and others and we offered our suggestion to Biju Borbaruah to contact government agencies for possible support.