

**Site Visit to Bhagvatula Charitable Trust
Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India**

**By
Mr. Radhaswamy Kidambi, May 04, 2012**

My visit to BCT began in the morning with a trip to the Asha Atlanta supported Vocational Training Center for girls. This center provides tailoring skills to girls and destitute women to enable them to be independent and self-sufficient. The training consists of three levels. The 1st level gives access to the fundamentals of tailoring, the 2nd level involves cutting of cloth to make traditional dresses while the 3rd level provides market awareness, quality control checks, cost control, time estimation etc. The center has also employed a fashion designer to produce designs as per standard/international format. For e.g. given the collar or shoulder size, the sleeve length, waist, body girth etc can be automatically selected from standard selection charts. Such training has proven to be valuable for the students, enabling them to be capable of sustaining themselves and compete with professional tailors and get employed as quality workforce rather than just becoming regular laborers with sewing skills.



Figure 1. Some of the staff and students of the Asha Atlanta supported tailoring center. Mr. Sri Ram Murthy, Secretary of BCT is to the standing left

I was also a witness to a real success story. During my previous visit on January 1st 2011, I met a girl undergoing training at BCT under this scheme. This girl was previously deserted by her husband after marriage at 22 years. She did not have any worthwhile formal education. Upon joining BCT, along with obtaining tailoring training she also obtained some formal education. At the end of her training, her husband came back begged her to join him. However, trouble soon started and he started physically and mentally abusing her. He also did not support her financially. She finally got fed up and came up with an idea to stand on her own legs by starting a tailoring school in a nearby fishing village. BCT helped her get a loan through a bank to buy 3 sewing machines. Since April 2012, she has 13 students enrolled in her school each paying Rs.500/month to learn tailoring. These students were previously spending Rs.600/month and going to another town to learn the same skills and were not happy with what they were learning.



Figure 2. The tailoring institute started by one of the students of the Asha Atlanta supported vocational training center at BCT

BCT has also started another training model for handicapped children. Most of the handicapped children suffer from polio or are hearing impaired. The school has roughly 6-8 girls and boys in the age group of 10-13yrs. For the last 4-5 months, a couple visiting from the US is working with the children; teaching them sign language and fitting them with hearing aids. In addition to some kind of formal education, the children are also taught to make items such as small pouches, bags for cell phones, decoration bags with straight line stitches, zips etc. Each product is marked with a logo and a number that gives the history of the product such as the designer, sewing artist, screen printing artist and how much time is taken at each stage. The date is entered in a computer by one of the students. The group works on a cost center basis and the money obtained by selling these products is divided according to the date. BCT has found that the demand for their products exceeded supply and so they interviewed and recruited another employee to add to their work force. The amazing thing about this is that the new entrant was trained by the children themselves.



Figure 3. The staff and students of the training center for the handicapped at BCT

Overall BCT is doing phenomenal work. As far as Asha is concerned I sincerely feel that whatever you fund them will be worthwhile and put to good use.

Sincerely,
Radhaswamy Kidambi (father of Asha Atlanta Volunteer Nandan Kidambi)
Hyderabad, India
May 04, 2012