

# Arogyaseva

Site Visit Report, March 27, 2009  
Submitted by: Binal N. Shah, Asha Toledo Volunteer.

**This Report Includes:** Arogyaseva phase-3 and Arogyaseva Phase-4 (proposal) site visit reports.  
**Bold Text is Phase-4 proposal related information**

I am fortunate that I got a chance to visit the deaf and dumb school and one of the Padas (hamlet) where life is too primitive to imagine so close (~150 km) to the business capital of India, Mumbai.

It was decided to install and inaugurate solar lamps in one Pada on Gudi Padwa (Maharashtrian New Year) and I got a chance to be with people who did not even think that they would have light installed in their homes ever. Their happiness and hope in their eyes cannot be expressed in words. For them Dr. Sujit, Mrs. Patwardhan probably hold a place above supernatural power in their hearts. They look with a different hope when they see Dr. Sujit.

We, Dr. Sujit Nilegaonkar, Mrs. Archana Anjan and Dr. Amol, Raju Chauhan, Harish Chauhan, Ankush, started our journey at 7:10 a.m. from Thane, and reached Jawahar Taluka at 10:30 a.m., approx. 150 km, and visited deaf and dumb school, run by Pragati Pratishtan. We were greeted by Mrs. Patwardhan and we met Mr. Parmeshwar Pulajade (hostel director), Satyanand Kelkad and Anil Dingode, who actively participate in day to day work of the school, and other work carried out by Pragati Pratishtan in Jawahar Taluka and other Padas around Jawahar. At first, we discussed about the following issues.

1. Support to two handicap students: - Sujit inquired and personally visited Bhagwan Mahavira Viklang Sahayta Samiti Center, Parel, Mumbai, and spoke with Ms. Jaya who runs the center. K.E.M orthopedic doctors offer service to the Samiti Center as and when needed. Jaipur foot will be offered free of cost to the two students. The only cost incurred will be travel and food, for a to and fro journey for the two students, which amounts to ~Rs. 5000. The Samiti has been running successfully since 9 years in Mumbai, and it not only fits Jaipur foot, but also offers additional nursing and training required for adaptation and use of the Jaipur foot. For some children, crutches are initially required before the child can completely adopt to Jaipur foot, which is offered free of cost by the Samiti. Mrs. Patwardhan and Dr. Sujit are waiting to see if any treatment (false hands) can be offered to children who have lost their hands. Like Jaipur foot, there are artificial hands which can be attached and used to lift some objects like pen, glass of water. Certainly not all jobs can be done with artificial hands but it will be a blessing if they can do some work and hence Sujit is going to inquire about it. Once more information is obtained, all the children will be taken together thus avoiding additional travel cost.
2. Agricultural guidance to farmers: - Mr. Balaji Achavale, secretary to the chairman of Mahratta Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture, Mr. Uday N. Borawake, (www.mcciapune.com) from Pune, is given an advance of Rs. 10000/- to come and

educate the people about different kinds of farming that is possible in different seasons. He is expected to come before April end, but a final date is yet to be fixed.

3. Vocational training center – They are expecting to start teaching Warli by mid-April. They will build tents on the ground of the hostel and start the center there.
4. **Bicycle Program – Mrs. Patwardhan and Sujit proposed to open a bicycle bank. In this bank, children from class 7 to 10, who have to walk greater than 5 km in one direction to go to school will be given a bicycle when school begins as conveyance support. When they are in school, the bicycle will be parked in school ground and when they leave for the day, they will take the bicycle with them. A person will be hired for regular maintenance of the bicycles in school. On the last day of the school (for the year in April), the bicycle will be returned to the school and will be kept in the school for next year. When children pass the 10<sup>th</sup> standard, there will be a fresh batch of students moving to the 7<sup>th</sup> standard, who will be benefitted by the same bicycle. The biggest concern is about robbery and misuse of the bicycle. They agree with the fact that it is quite possible that out of 100 students at least 1 may sell the bicycle and say that it was stolen. Currently the bicycle program is successfully running at Chhatrapati Siksian Sansta, Dengachai Net, Jawahar and Mrs. Patwardhan will consent the principal about the pros and cons of the program.**

It takes pleasure in seeing that Pragati Pratishthan, received the Rajiv Sahde Grahmin Vikas Puraskar of 2009. They truly deserve it. (Pictures 006-9)



Mr. Parmeshwar Pulavade (hostel director), Satyanand Kelkad and Anil Dingode then showed me the school. At first we visited the office, where they record the daily attendance of the students on board as well as on paper (Picture 012). They also showed the projector and the computer, which is used to educate the students via visual effects (Pictures 010-11). Next we saw the computer room, where only two computers are installed and are used to teach typing in Marathi and other basics of computer to the students (Picture 014). We then saw the audiometer room, where children are taught sounds of birds, animals etc and are then tested by recognition (Picture 015, 013). Since it was a holiday, I did not get a chance to see it functioning. The next room was the play room, where children play the popular game of 'Saap-Sidi' and 'Ludo' on the floor. They learn more through play than through just classroom teaching.



I then visited the boys hostel (Picture 017). Before we approached most of the children were engrossed in peeping out of the window, as for them I was a stranger. When I entered the hostel, all of them sat down, some started reading, some were playing. A boy told me his name and the village from where he came and which standard he is. He is the only boy who can partially speak but cannot hear. Needless to say, Mr. Anil asked him questions through their sign language. Before I left their room, a boy ran to me, and asked me to write my name, and the village I come from. He translated my name, to all the boys. I was touched and I felt handicapped that I could not express my emotions to them as I did not know their sign language.

We also visited the Biogas plant, the electricity (power) generated from the Biogas is sufficient for the school to run. Since, it is not the main objective of this report I am excluding the details of it.

I could not visit the girls hostel and it was postponed to do so after we returned from visiting the padas.

### **Palnagar Anganwadi Program**

**After that we visited Kotiwada (a Pada of 70 families, approx. 30 Km from Jawahar, Taluka). Tar road is only half-way to Kotiwada, the other half is made of mud and red stones. There we visited a model Palnagar (known as Anganwadi, by Government) started by Pragati Pratishthan and is running successfully since 6 months (Picture 018-24). All children in the pada up to 4 years of age, come to Palnagar and spend their entire day learning and playing. A physician (Dr. Mungai, Kalwa), visits them once a week and records their height and weight along with weekly check-up for nutrition levels.**

**Children are offered meal and food at regular intervals during the entire day (Picture 021). Food rich in proteins, vitamins and calcium is given in the form of lapsi, kitchdi, Seera, Ukma, Biscuits, rajgiri vadi, usad and mixed pulses. Record of consumption of food by each child is maintained. They withdraw a fixed amount of grains per child from the big stock per food item, and keep note of it. The same food is offered to pregnant women after 6 months of pregnancy. Infants below 6 months are also given oil massage and are taken care in a separate room. Just born babies are given an infant-kit free of cost from balwadi that contains two sets of clothes, small bedding for the kid, cap, socks and a mosquito net. One kit costs Rs. 230, and the cost is taken care by Pragati Pratisthan. Sujit, decided to inquire about the kit, and see if it can be reduced. On the auspicious occasion of Gudi Padwa, Seera was offered to all the children. Ms. Sunita Dhoke (Picture 019) takes care of the children while Mr. Satyander Kalkad takes care of medicines for the kids and for pregnant women. Pregnant women are also given iron and calcium supplements based on the physician's recommendations and other necessary medication. During my visit, there were 42 children. I apologize that I did not count the number of boys and girls separately. The children are also taught Marathi alphabets, names of birds and animals, few poems in Marathi and are prepared to go to school by the age of 4 (Picture 020).**

**There exists a government school, but it is very poorly maintained. One teacher for all students from 1-4<sup>th</sup> standard and also he/she does not come on regular basis. They plan to build such Palnagars in five other padas and need funds for the same. Approximately Rs.**

10/per day/per child is spent at Palnagar. This Palnagar was also running on solar lamp and I spoke with Ms. Sunita who takes care of Palnagar so far she has not encountered any problems with the solar lamp.



We then moved to Dahvadapada, where Mr. Sachin Kulkarni from Microjet solar systems had installed solar lamps in 20 houses of the pada (population – 199, Picture 001) and one street solar lamp. Solar lamps are installed only in those homes in which family members have left alcohol, and who send their children regularly to school and who have been doing so since the past three months (Pictures 025-40). The street solar lamp has an automatic timer to start at 6:00 p.m. and

stop at 6:00 a.m. Solar lamp installed at homes can supply DC current to two lamps (one enough for studying and one slightly bigger), one night lamp and one cell phone charger. The biggest surprise was, there is hardly any water to drink in the house, but there is a need for a cell phone charger in some houses especially those who sometimes travel to city for daily wage labor work.

We visited two homes where solar lamp was inaugurated; one home had a family of 5, 3 children and parents. There were just not enough utensils in their kitchen (Picture 039-40). If only one lamp is used at once, then the total charge in the solar battery can run for 1 ½ day. However, if two or all lamps are used then the charge will last for 10-15 hours. Regular maintenance is needed, and 5 youth are appointed from the Pada. These 5 youth regularly clean the upper surface of the solar receiver and keep it free of dust. Before solar lamps, each house used to spend about Rs. 50 per month in lantern oil, repair and maintenance. These 5 youth collect Rs. 25 from each house per month and deposit the same in central bank at Jawahar in the name of head of the household. If they are willing to give more they are free to do so, and if during a month, they fail to save Rs. 25, they are allowed to give more when they have it. After two years, the solar battery needs replacement, and this money saved each month will be used for the cost of the replacement battery for each household. So far there have been no complaints from other padas where solar lamps have been installed.





*Solar Set Distribution List  
At Dahawadpada Post Pimpalshet Tal Jawhar Dist  
Grampachayat : Dasakod*

*Name of Family*

1. Raman Tulshiram Lakhani
2. Arjun Trimbak Dahawad
3. Soma Trimbak Dahawad
4. Navasu Savanji Bhoje
5. Gangaram Ambu Dahawad
6. Sadu Budhya Dahawad
7. Kashinath Krishna Bhoje
8. Krishna Bhudhya Dahawad
9. Devram Devaji Dahawad
10. Endhar Ramdas Garel
11. Vishnu Savaji Bhoje
12. Vishnu Devaji Dahawad
13. Manoj Devaji Dahawad
14. Chandrakant Soma Dahawad
15. Jairam Devaji Dahawad
16. Krishna Devaji Bhoje
17. Dilip Ramu Kharpad
18. Ramdas Trimbak Dahawad
19. Dasharath Gopal Bhoje
20. Devaji Bendu Dahawad
21. Vilas Mavaji Baraf

*Total Population 199*



The street solar lamp and the household lamp were inaugurated after a small Puja by Mrs. Patwardhan and the head of the household. I never imagined that I would see the smile on the faces of people who did not even imagine that they would see light after sunset in their life-time. It is an honour to be a part of this project. I also truly appreciate Mr. Kulkarni's efforts in coming from Delhi, to install the solar lamps.

By then it was 2:30 p.m. and we returned to deaf and dumb school at Jawahar. I then visited the girls hostel on the top floor. It is not as good as the boys hostel. The girls hostel has temporary roof. In the afternoon it gets extremely hot and uncomfortable for the girls hence they all spend their afternoon under the trees in the open. The girls hostel room also lacked any windows, it was open from all sides. I think it needs renovation with respect to proper roof, windows and fans (Pictures 042-46).



After having lunch we left the school at 3:00 p.m and reached Dadar at 7:00 p.m.

## **My views about the requirements**

I strongly Recommend that Asha Toledo should go for Anganwadi program, Bicycle program and also renovation of Pragati Hostel at Mokhada in next phase of project.

I personally felt that the main problem in these areas is water. On each side of the road, all you see is dry barren hills. Unfortunately, I did not take those photos, I was just thinking. Generally women (including children) have to travel more than 8 km one way to get nearly a gallon of water that also if there is water in the wells else go back empty handed. These areas get very heavy rainfall during the monsoon (mid-June to mid-August) but that is it. The water sweeps in to the ground and the rest of the year it is dry. There are no reservoirs where water can be stored. Small dams are built across a very small river near Jawahar but it is not accessible to all the padas. Also it seems impractical to store water for everyone not only for drinking but also for agriculture. We also saw cows, breeding, but the bones of all were visible. I liked Sujit's idea about replicating REED project which he has visited in Hyderabad. The cost is much more. But I think it will solve most of their problems – water for drinking, cooking and sanitization and also for agriculture. People (including children) will not have to spend their entire day just getting water and will have time to go to school, will be healthy and also get trained in areas that would bring them some income and practice animal husbandry and farming. Water is one of the basic needs of life, along with food, clothing and shelter I guess we all agree to it.

About REED project, I will ask Sujit to send a detailed report and we can think about it. I understand it is against Asha norms, but we can certainly guide him to other funding agencies if possible.

Sujit is doing an incredible job and doesn't leave any stones unturned.