

# Kalyania – Prayas Centre

## A Site Visit Report

Abhyuday Mandal  
Asha for Education, Athens & Atlanta Chapters

December 26, 2015

I had the privilege of visiting again our project Kalyania - Prayas Centre located at the serene and beautiful town of Kalyani, in the District of Nadia of West Bengal, India on a quiet morning on December 26, 2015. Like every time I visit the place, I am impressed by the new developments, new dimensions they are adding constantly to their Education Module while expanding and consolidating the already existing ones.

The first thing that I saw was the Park which provides so much of space for many of the aesthetic activities of Kalyania, neatly fenced with two gates and a water faucet. The banyan tree provided a natural-cum-erected shade that served for a semi covered area for many of the training classes that are held there routinely.

Although it was a holiday, I met most of the relevant people including the secretary, Dr. Partha Pratim Dhar, vice-president Mr. Bishwanath De, who is currently looking after the operational aspects of some of their projects, Professor Chitreshwar Sen and many others, who man the office and other essential services. I had a good discussion with several of them, visited the areas being developed and had the overall gut feeling that Kalyania is not only humming with their usual activities but also are expanding significantly their area of activities to provide support to more and more of the distressed people who are living in different pockets in the neighborhood. However, before I elaborate on these aspects further, let me, albeit briefly, recapitulate the background, mission and objectives of Kalyania. The key objectives of Kalyania are:

1. Holistic education for deprived children living by the river bank or ghettos,
2. Empowerment of women and children through non-formal and vocational education and training, formation of SHGs (self help groups) etc.,
3. Providing health care for children, women and the elderly people in the community who are deprived financially, psychologically or both. In particular, they provide a life support system for the gerontological advanced, and provide health care for the outreach where the public sector health care module is unable to reach.

## Primary Education for the Underprivileged Children:

With these objectives in mind, a group of people consisting largely of doctors, university professors and retired executives established the Kalyania Society in 1998 with the objective of providing assistance and support in times of hardship and distress, to those who needed them most. The children were growing up in an unhealthy atmosphere, without proper education. They needed to be absorbed into a regular educational system and the Suhasini Shishu Niketan (SSN) was established in 2003 with six children and one voluntary teacher. The School has since grown into a second major activity of Kalyania with 84 students, both male and female, and 12 teachers. It now includes

The Computer Training Center  
School of Fine Arts and Drawing  
School of Performing Arts  
A Library.

The Computer Training Center is located in the School Building. The classes of Center of Fine Arts, Performing Arts and Galpo Dadur Aasar are held in the adjoining Park under a huge banyan tree with due permission from the Kalyani Municipality. This park has been mentioned in the beginning of this report. The Library is located in the main Building at B-1/275, Kalyani, Nadia.

**Target Group of Students/Trainees:** Previously the target group of students came from a defined area called “Majher Char” sector, where over 1000 poor families were identified for Kalyania oriented services. Kalyania is now expanding its impact zones to include finally 10,000 families that would cover most of such pockets in the neighborhood.

The present statistics of the SSN is as follows:

School	Location: B-1/398, Kalyani	rental
	Medium of Instruction	Bengali
Students	Total Number of students (KG-I thru Class IV)	84 (40 B + 44 G)
Teachers and Staff	Number of paid teachers	11
	Number of voluntary teachers	01
	Number of guest teachers	06
	Number of paid support staff	02
	Number of paid office staff:	01

Details of the subsidiaries of SSN:

Name	Students (B+G)	Teacher's Honorarium	Duration	Nature of support
Center of Fine Arts and Drawing	48+117	0	1.5 hour every Sunday	Drawing books, paint kit, light tiffin, guidance
Computer Training Center	10+14	800/month	one hour twice a week	Computer, books and notepads, pencils, rub- ber, sharpener, rulers etc.
Center of Performing Arts	5+30	0	thrice per week	Based on performances
Library	20+19	0	40 min- utes once a week	Story books, autobiogra- phy of the great men etc.
Galpo Dadur Aasar (Story telling)	48+117	0	1 hour ev- ery Sun- day	exercise books, pencils, rubber, sharpeners etc.

### More Recent Projects:

Kalyania has taken up four new Training Projects only since 2014 for the first (two vocational oriented) of which Asha for Education has started providing some nodal grants. These are:

1. Vocational Training for Home Nursing – an extension and expansion of their earlier Project on Ayah Training
2. Kalyania Sewing Center
3. A Day-Care Center for senior citizens living in Kalyani and the neighborhood
4. Care for psychological disorders among school-going children: Amelioration and management through awareness among the primary care-givers: their teachers and parents/guardians.

### Vocational Training for Home Nursing:

Kalyania first successfully piloted the Project of Sevika Training in the year 2005. Since then seven batches of Sevikas have been successfully trained and gainfully employed. The training was imparted to women who have at least passed class VIII, by doctors attached to Kalyania. The training consisted of classroom lectures and subsequent one month of practice training at Kalyania and other nursing homes in the neighborhood. The Sevikas were given certificates and job assignments through Kalyania although they were free to seek job by themselves.

The Sevikas are very much in demand and there is a lot of scope for training more young women as Sevikas, for their livelihood security. The number of candidates that could be trained through this voluntary approach so far was very few and this hardly could meet the increasing demand for such Sevikas. The result is that a huge fleet of untrained persons are now claiming to be Sevikas and working privately in different residences. The risk factor of such employment is very high but people are helpless given the present lifestyle of our society. Note that Kalyani has a large population of elderly people (like the parents of the volunteer conducting the site-visit).

A similar pilot project was approved under KUSP - undertaken in collaboration with the Kalyani Municipality in 2010, was quite meaningful but could not be continued for lack of partner/sponsor.

Once this Project was implemented, the need for such training became apparent and a training program for women in Home Nursing was designed for ladies with an academic background of 10+2 with reading and writing knowledge of two of the three prescribed languages (English, Bengali and Hindi). The first batch of students passed out and was handed over certificates by the Vice Chancellor, Kalyani University on the Teacher's day (5th September, 2015).

*The Vice Chancellor of the Kalyani University suggested that this training could well be recognized by the University under the aegis of their Department of Social Welfare along with the Sewing Center.* The syllabus was reorganized to meet these needs and the Project submitted to the Vice Chancellor, Kalyani University sometime in 14th September, 2015. The syllabus includes learning language skills, understanding basics of human anatomy and physiology, pre- and post natal management, geriatric care, bed-patient management, managing invalids, elementary physiotherapy and efficient use of home/medical appliances. **I was very impressed with this.**

Presently the course is open for 10+2 applicants (intake 12 per batch, two batches a year) coming from Kalyani and neighbouring areas like Kanchrapara, Naihati, Halishahar (24-Parganas N), Gayeshpur, Haringhata and Mohanpur Municipalities. **Once the Certificate is recognized by the Kalyani University, the number of seats will be expanded to 20 and selection made from applicants from all over the State of West Bengal as per norms prescribed by the University.**

### **Kalyania Sewing Center:**

The sewing centre started functioning with the first batch of 9 trainees in May, 2014. Seven of them completed the course by the end of October, 2014. The second batch of trainees consisting of 14 started in November, 2014. Twelve of them completed by May, 2015. Third batch of trainees consisting of 12

candidates started their training on 20th May, 2015 and completed their course by November; 2015. Training for a fresh batch is on.

Discussions with the management revealed that this training was started after a lot of thought when two machines were received as gift. The primary concern was the employment opportunities of thus trained. Results of an extensive survey in Kalyani revealed the following:

1. Prior to starting the training talks with major tailoring shops and drapers revealed their keen interest in this training. They were very enthusiastic about this training as they were chronically short of trained hands to take up sewing and stitching. They said they will be in a position to absorb these trained personnel.
2. Kalyania planned another alternative option that the trained personnel would seek their own orders from the Drapers and wholesale ready-made garment makers and do the stitching using our machines at a minimal maintenance oriented service charge for the purpose. At present the training is being imparted on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday each week, from 15 hours to 18 hours. Rest of the days the machines largely lie idle. This provision was expected to improve the efficiency of use of these machines. Some of the Private Schools are prepared to give orders for the School dress of their students.
3. For those who want to work from their homes, Kalyania plans to help them procure Bank loans to buy their own machines and work whenever they find time. This apparently is more lucrative to the trainees. Kalyania, in such a situation will have to act as Guarantor. Otherwise no such loan may be available.

These are the three options with which Kalyania started the project. Only time testing in the job market will finally decide whether this will succeed.

For the present the syllabus covers (other than language skills in English and Bengali), basic stitching and cutting techniques, women's apparel such as blouse, petticoat, salwar-kameez, tunics and tops and men's undergarments and pyjamas.

Presently the training is open to 10+2 applicants from Kalyani and neighbouring Municipalities. Kalyania has applied for recognition of this certificate under the Department of Social Welfare, Kalyani University. Once the certificate is recognized, the number of seats will have to increase to 20-25 and courses open to all eligible candidates from the State of West Bengal.

I had the opportunity to visit the newly constructed workshop-cum-classroom for the Sewing center at B-1/388, Kalyani with brick walls and corrugated tin roof with good ventilation through windows and good lighting arrangements. The Workshop has some eight new or nearly new machines and still space for four additional machines, a cutting table and required lockers.

## Other Activities:

1. **Adult Education Programme:** Under the ambit of its Education Module Kalyania had initiated an Adult Education Scheme which they are running for three years now in the evenings (two days/wk). Although there is a lot of interest in this, but the attendance continues to remain patchy. Obviously, earning bread for their families is more important for these adults than learning.

A few years back Kalyania had started a programme of providing scholarships to students who pass out from SSN and other meritorious poor students upto graduation level and at present 29 such stipends are being provided.

2. Health and Welfare related programs: These include

An Outdoor Clinic (7-days a week manned by qualified doctors)  
and free medicine Supply

An “Epilepsy Club” which is attended by nearly 100 patients (free  
diagnosis, medicines and awareness agenda)

A Diabetic clinic which provides free monitoring and medication to 20  
patients at present

Dental clinic

Eye Clinic

Senior Citizens annual health check ups

Awareness programmes related to health and pre- and post-natal problems

3. **An Old Age Home:** It now accommodates nearly 30 seniors residing in three buildings within the Block 1 of Kalyani. They are provided a room to stay, four meals a day, medical support and other entertainment features at a very reasonable cost.

## Conclusion:

They are regularly expanding their area from a mouza to township, the neighboring municipalities with an eye to spreading the cheer among the underprivileged. In this endeavor, I felt happy that the funds provided by Asha for Education for their education module has been put to good use. My understanding of the workings of the “Kalyania - Prayas Centre” is that these people are able to optimally use the funds they receive. The demands are high and I wish they are able to sustain their efforts. I feel that they are competent enough to achieve their goals.

# Suhasini Sishu Niketan



## Home Nursing



## Sewing Class



## Adult Education



To  
Vice Chancellor  
Kalyani University  
Kalyani, W. Bengal-741235

**Ref. No. : 233/KLY/14.09.15**  
**Dated : 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**

**Sub: Recognition of Proficiency Certificate on Home Nursing/Sewing and stitching issued  
by Kalyania: Re**

(Through Proper channel)

Sir,

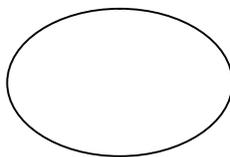
We understand that Kalyani University, through its Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, Faculty of Arts operates many short term courses – both proficiency and diploma – that complement the service sector of the various communities.

We at Kalyania, a Social Service Organisation (NGO) have launched two proficiency courses viz., (1) Proficiency in Home Nursing and (2) Proficiency in Sewing and Stitching since 2013 and have received overwhelming response from willing candidates belonging to both poor and middle class families. Having convinced ourselves of the ability to provide quality training, we pray that our Proficiency Courses in Home Nursing, and Sewing and Stitching be assessed if necessary, and on approval the certificate of Proficiency be issued under the banner of the prestigious Kalyani University. This would add a lot of credibility to this certificate, will attract more talented students and serve a much needed function in providing avenues for earning in a job-starved society. We in our turn will be ready to make adjustments on our schedule to meet the norms of the University.

Submitted for kind perusal and necessary action

Sincerely yours,

(Partha Pratim Dhar)  
Secretary, Kalyania



(Dr. S. N. Banerjee)  
President, Kalyania

Encl: As above

## **PROFICIENCY IN (1) HOME NURSING AND (2) SEWING AND STITCHING OFFERED BY KALYANIA (NGO)**

### **PREAMBLE:**

Kalyania is a registered NGO operating in raising the lot of the flotsams living in ghettos along the riverside and elsewhere in our town of Kalyani through various social services since 1998. These services include Outdoor Clinic including prescription serving, Diabetic Club, Epilepsy Club, eye and dental clinic, an old age home for the seniors who are lonely, a primary school for the children totally free of cost that accommodates now ca. 90 students, a computer centre for these and other poor children and Centres of visual and performing art, with the objective of making the teaching more holistic. For adults, a course in adult education for those who cannot read, write or do simple sums has also been initiated. The details of these are available in our last three year's Annual Reports that are attached herewith.

The risk of girls becoming vagrant being great in the BPL and flotsam category, as they reach their adolescence - we had developed a vocational Project, i.e., Aya training in 2003 that still continues with gainful employment of these girls. We are proud to say that almost all the trained girls are employed and their deployment managed by us although they are free to take assignments by themselves. Recent additions to this aspect are a Centre for Home Nursing – the later being a more advanced version – from ayah to a House keeper and a Center for Home Nursing.

(1) **Centre for Home Nursing:** It was realized that services required by significant population of lonely seniors and double earners or single families is not just serving prescription, keeping temperature records etc. that ayahs do, but a little more – partial management of the home front.

We developed a **Home Nursing** course that along with these also gives training in geriatric management, elementary physiotherapy, making use of modern gadgets in the fast track homes including the kitchen, and if necessary, reading out to seniors with reduced vision and so on and giving them company at home including all prescribed day-care services normally provided by more elite Organisations like Tribecka etc. On being sanctioned such a Project by KUSP/Kalyani Municipality in 2011, we implemented this Project with great success. The only problem that we faced was the

educational level of the minimum class VIII (Same as that of the Ayahs) students. This we found was not enough to provide mental food to the seniors. So we raised the minimum qualifications for this course to Madhyamik level. Yet we are getting applications for this training from X+2 or even graduates. The demand for this course was much more than that of Ayahs. This was primarily because of higher emoluments (somewhere between Registered Ayahs or Registered Nurses). To most it appears more dignified, satisfactory emoluments and the need not to clean dirtied clothing or beds. The certificate provided to the successfully trained is called Proficiency in Home Nursing.

(2) **Sewing Center:** The **Sewing Center** was started with two machines and four students in 2013 and now has eight such machines and stitching / designers facilities and can accommodate 10 students per batch. This Center attracts a lot of ladies not only from the poor class but also from middle class. After two years, we have now developed a full syllabus for a Proficiency in Sewing and stitching as per prescribed syllabus.

Expenses for implementing this course being higher, its implementation is largely sponsor dependent. For last two years this course (see annexure II) is being sponsored by **Asha for Education, USA** which is devoted to promoting education among children in India and as part of their Asha-Kalyania Prayas Project.

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