**Site Visit and Evaluation Report**

Of

**Pratirodh Sansthan**

For

***Asha for Education***

By

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***Project Background***

Pratirodh Sansthan is a NGO that focuses on tribal rights empowerment, and education in tribal regions of Chittorgarh district in southern Rajasthan. Pratirodh Sansthan has its roots in Prayas, a tribal rights and advocacy organization in the region. Pratirodh Sansthan focuses primarily on girl education and women rights and has been primarily seeded byAsha for Education for starting and operating this one of a kind residential school for tribal girls, in this region. The organization leverages its deep roots into tribal community to bring education to the first generation girl students. With AfE-SV support the school – ***Adhaarshila*** (Residential School for Girls) - has been running since 2008, with over 50 girls enrolled in this non-formal residential school with aims to bring quality education to tribal girls up to grade V. Primarily objective of this project is not only to make these girls literate but to act as a bridge to government KGBV schema for continued higher education, and to impart awareness of women equality and girl education in general in the tribal society.

***Site Visit Background***

The purpose of this site visit is to conduct a scheduled survey, verify the operations, and primarily understand and evaluate the workings of the organization itself. The site visit is scheduled in three parts, visit & evaluation of the school, discussion & meeting with the village community members, and discussion & evaluation meeting with Pratirodh Sansthan coordinator(s).

***Residential School - Hostel***

We arrived at the school around 9:00 AM and as we walked towards the hostel building, we could see a bunch of girls moving around the building and two women trying to orchestrate there movement – it was preparation for the school. There were children congregating in the compound for morning prayers. Suman Ji emerged from amongst the flock to greet us, the teachers turned away from the girls and moved towards us. As we exchanged greetings, the gathering in the compound continued unabated, and within a few minutes, what seemed like a random movement became a more organized collective as the children started reciting prayers – without teachers or monitors. The visit was pre-scheduled, and we were expected early in the morning; it was encouraging however that our visit didn’t seem to effect the schedule. We went on to join the children with their prayer and yoga session in the compound along with the teachers [add names] and Suman Ji; Narayani Ji emerged from behind the building with kitchen utensils being taken for cleaning and ctopped by to greet us before quickly getting back to her work, promising to meet us in the school after she has completed her cooking for lunch. As the girls broke out of their surya namaskar culminating the prayer session, Rekha Ji introduced the visitors to the children, who while noticed, seemed mostly uninterested, in our presence. There were roughly 52 girls in attendance, a few were not school regulars but had joined the classes only a few days back, we were told. The school has 50 regular students; although 57b are total registered but mot regularly attend the school. As the clock stuck 10:00, we proceeded towards the school building with Suman Ji, and the girls were led with the teachers towards the school – it was time for the class. We intended to return to the hostel building for a further inspection, but, wanted to move along with the students in their daily routine first.

***The School***

School building is one big hall with two adjoining smaller rooms mostly filled with containers and closets with teaching material – books, stationary, blackboards etc. The hall is where most of the activities seemed to happen, in groups, smaller breakout sessions with or without teachers. The hall has a tin roof and windows on each side, with a mud enforced floor, the place seemed well lit and clean. Students took their place around the hall and we sat along with them joined by Suman Ji. A round of introduction followed with each girl naming their name, village they came from, how long they’ve been attending the school, and what they like the most about the school . The common theme was that they loved studying and playing with their friends in the school – the students related being in the school to playing which is a cornerstone of self paced activity based learning. Learning can be fun, and it certainly sounded like it was. The girl mostly sounded very confident in introducing themselves; speaking in mewadi was very helpful in breaking the ice. We were told from past site visits of some good tribal songs the girls sing, and we got to hear a few of them. One of girls, Meena sang a tribal song that speaks of a day in village life for a women and a few other girls spontaniously joined in singing and giving rhythm along the way. Meena gave a confident hindi translation of the verses after she finished her recital. In that moment it was no obvious that we were sitting in middle of a remote tribal belt with a single lane road connecting to the nearest town, more than 25 Km away, the students and environment in the school was no different from any other school, although this setting seemed more fun. The session broke at 11:00, and the teachers started to organize the girls into language learning groups for an interactive session. We stepped out of the hall with Suman Ji with a quick discussion session, before we step back to join the girls in their language sessions.

[Observations - general background and operations]

1. Most of the girls are from nearby hamlets and villages of Amarpura, although children from 100-150 Km range come to the school.
2. Most girls are from SC/ST casts mostly, meena and bheel tribes, and quite a few of them are orphans.
3. Almost every other girl is married, and child marriages are quite prevalent in the community – Prayas in general has been working on this issue for a long time, and things have improved over last few decades, although its no way close to being eliminated.
4. 25 girls from Pratapgarh came for admitting but were to be turned away because of lack of space and resources.
5. The oldest girl in the school if 14 yo and is in group-2 learning level
6. All material is from Digantar and there is lack of funds to procure new study material, so most of the books are recycled or are photocopied. In some cases photi sopying material is more expensive as compared to procuring new material.
7. Most of the time the children are divided into two or three groups by learnig level with maximum of 20-25 girls in each group
8. 18 children at grade-V level, and 8 preparing for Grade-V level, total of 26 ready for KGBV examination, and a few more students possibly close to grade-V level.
9. Sunday is day off form the classes i.e. there are no scheduled classes but instead of focussed on maintainance of the school, washing clothes, group discussions, and posisbly excursions around the village
10. Saturday is mostly activities day with painting, skits, song & dance sessions, and a balsabha – group discussion session with all teachers and project coordinators.
11. Play time of spread through the day, the students are in open environment all day anyways, but, they play in open during the evening
12. Building rent is around 800 Rs/mo but does not cover maintenance and enhancements if any
13. Water is a problem in the area, earlier facility had a open tube well, but, they have to pay for drinking water here and cost is upwards of 250 Rs/mo
14. Prayas office is right next door and has a computer that girls get to use sometimes and get training in basic use of a computer
15. All accounts, funds, and bills are maaged through Prayas, including reports and auditing
16. Hostel building has limited capacity and is only used as sleeping quarters; school building is where most things are stored
17. Children keep their stuff in the adjoining rooms to the main hall of the school building; girls pick up their things every morning from the school and take it bck to the hostel.
18. Every girl gets a big canister with a label to heep her belongings in that are stowed in the school building.
19. Children along with teachers make most of the study material – charts, posters, flash cards etc. and learn while making these things.
20. Children also paint charts themselves that are displayed in the school walls
21. There has never been a complaint of theft or things going missing; most girls don’t have processions and mostly store their clothes – which are given by the school or donated in there canisters.
22. Individual storage is to ensure some routine, and make them practice some good hygiene – wash and clean-fold their cloths etc.
23. Study material is distributed regularly or on need basis
24. Children do get homework regularly, and group discussions and help is encouraged instead of individual excellence; attaining a learning level is not primary objective, but, comprehension is
25. The generous compound around the building is used to grow Jowar (millets), bajra, and some fruits (papaya, banana). Some food is sourced from this cultivation while most if bought from the open markets.
    1. Prayas strongly desires to work with the community to completely rely on its own produce eventually
26. Students are organized into 7 groups that are designated monthly work tasks that rotate every week, its meant to ensure that the everybody participates in all aspects of learning and running of the school
27. There is a flexible time table that is followed where day tasks are divided up
28. Students are divided up into learning groups by their evaluation level for some classes – language and math classes are by groups, social studies, ativity classes are common for all and has arbitrary grouping to keep things manageable.
29. There was a month long summer holiday, and a 10 day Diwali break; no other holidays except on as-needed basis
30. Science is formally taught only at grade-V, although some science basics are covered under activity sessions
31. Children went on an exposure trip to Handi Ghati, Kumbhalgarh this year
32. School has a very small kitchen and has space problem; use of open spaces helps but it becomes very difficult in rainy seasons.
33. Children get breakfast around 6-7 AM, lunch around 1PM and dinner around 7-8PM; serve tea/milk only in the morning
34. Shildren are evaluated 1-2 times per year using digantar grading methodology and state curriculum

[observations - school staff]

1. Narayani Ji care taker of the school – watches over the girls, cleans the premise and helps girls in daily chores etc.
2. Ramesh ji and two helpers in the school mostly helping with maintenance, running errands, and helping with the daily operations of Prayas
3. Rajha Ji has been working with Prayas since last 13 years, teaches in the school since the project started.
   1. Worked with Mahila Jan Pratinidhi – member of gram panchayat on women and worker rights etc.
   2. Meets with the gram samuh regularly and stays in the hostel when training with the gram samuh and helps with the school occasionally
4. Kusum ji is a teacher for close to two years
   1. Kusum ji is a BA, and pursuing MA (Hindi) part-time
5. Priyanka Ji has been with the school since it started and has got training in Degantar; and has been with Prayas for a long time
   1. Priyanka Ji is a BA, B.Ed, and teaches sciences in the school
   2. Trained in Degantar methodology, and has worked and trained under SSA scheme
6. Regular teacher training is required and Priyanka ji stressed on a need of training on an on-going basis. Partnering with Vidya Bhavan, Uaipur, is perhaps a good option and should be explored further
7. School staff seems very competent and dedicated, seems very good use of limited resources
8. Teachers find the study material to be sufficient for the students, but, need newer material from digantar and.or other sources
9. Priyanka ji finds a lot of change in the girls after they spend one year in the school, generally improved confidence, awareness, and much more independent.
10. Awareness towards education is perceptible when they go into villages with the girls and meet the parents and community in general
11. Teachers attend monthly meeting with the students and parents

[progress]

1. 16 girls sat for KGBV examination and al 16 cleared the examination last year however, only 14 joined the school and are attending KBGV Nagahgarh. Two girls are not attending KBGV and in their home right now
2. This year total of 26 girls are preparing for KBGV examinations and hope is that all of them will be admitted
3. Nahargadn KBGV examination center is in Dherji ka Khera school

***Bhadsoda Village tour***

Seond part of the visit was focussed primarily on travelling to the Bhadsoda village and other hanlets near Amarpura and meet families of the students. This leg of the visit was not scheduled which made it a little unpredictable but it was intended to gauge the real perception of both the organization as well as of the school, and its effect on the children.

We rechaed the schhool in Amarpura around 10 AM over tea for a discussion with Khemraj ji, Suman Ji, Narayan Ji, and Shyamlal and discussed a variery of issues that Prayas and Pratirodh Sanstahn is working on in the area. We also discussed specifically about the resource constraints in school operations, and increase in expenditure due to high cost/inflation etc. and desire to support higher wages for teachers.

We started on our 20 min road trip to Bhadsoda around 11:30. Bhadsoda is connected through only an unpaved road from main Chittorgarh road that runs through Amarpura. Our first stop was at the Bhadsoda village community center, for a meeting with the mukhiya of the village. Familiarity with Pratirodh Sansthan and its workers was quite perceptible. Suman Ji and Khemraj ji are well known and respected amongst the villagers. The village itself was no different from an average tribal village in southern Rajasthan, or in any part of the country for that matter. Limited road access, no water or sewer lines, tube wells and/or water wells are the only source of drinking and utility water, goats and cows are predominant source of income besides small farming which is limited by rainfall. Most men seasonally travel to cities for labor work and some scout for work through MNREGA program with help from Prayas. The stories and challenges are no different from any other village, what is visibly different is a very active gram samuh and visibly active participation of women in gram samuh meetings. Perhaps it no coincidence that 16 girls from this village are attending the Amarpura Adhaarshila school, and 7 are now full time students in KGBV Nahargarh.

[observations & general discussion]

1. Bhuri d/o Motibai was a student Adhaarshila s last two years, and is studying in KGBV, Nahargarh since last year. Motibai is a farmer and has three goats, Bhuri is her only daughter and was very happy with her child getting admitted in the government school in Nahargarh. She has known Suman Ji for a few years, and has worked with SHG that Prayas atarted over a decade back in Bhadesar. Motibai appatently never had a doubt that her child will get admitted in the big government school and had all the confidence inAdaahshila school.
2. Krishnai d/o Syambai was a student in Aadharsiula school and graduated to grave-V but dropped off instead of pursuing KGBV. Krishnai is already married, was married before she was admitted in Adhaarshila school and is the primary reason her parents do not want her to attend KGBV but instead take care of the household, siblings and eventually go her husband’s place.
3. Very good reputation that Prayas and Khemraj ji, Suman ji, in general have with the villagers, in particular with women of the village due to SHG work.
4. Most of the village is dependent on small farming, and recently on MNREGA work in the district, most men are predominantly seasonal migrant labours now – which is a change that has occurred in last decade or so
5. Water scarcity is a persistent problem that direclty affects the food avaiability.
6. This area was drought effected a few years back and suffered starvation deaths as well
7. Villagers in general that we spoke with seemed very receptive to sending girls to school and with the girls attending full time residential school in Nahargarh.
8. Child Marraige is a persistent problem in the region and while progress has been made through interventions of Pratirodh Sansthan, its still a long way to go
9. Food and Water scarcity and lack of secure income from small farming (that used to be profitable about a decade back) has led to erosion of village communities, and promoted migration. Increased migration, in turn has led to increase in child marriage because early marriage means more secure future of the girls especially when the father is predominantly migrant labor and the family feels its better to have a girl married instead of keeping a teenaged girl in a house without a male head.