

# Asha Atlanta General Meeting, 3rd April 2016

Skype with Padmanava da\_3rd April 2016, Tapo, Janani, Arka

2010 -started 4 centres

Mother tongue Bengali and Urdu

25 students, call a centre

Later they found a bigger place, 65-55 distribution at 2 locations - one of them is a club house, Rs 200-300 as rent a month to that club to get the space for 2 hours in the afternoon,

They used to run the centers in morning initially, now they shifted it to after-school

Padmanava da talked with MLA as well, she told to give some food to the kids, poor, malnourished, some kind of breakfast, we started giving little breakfast.

Initially basic step, only twice a week food was being given. Now a donor came, Jayati, - \$10,000 to Asha every year, single mother, she teaches music lessons to kids, and sends full money to Asha.

Initially 2 lakh INR, now 5 lakh, number of students increased, plus amount to teachers has gone up. Students starting dropping off after class 8. As midday meal stop.

Plus girl reach puberty around 14 years age/class 8. Good thing this is in locality, they do not have to go outside the community. In this money cannot get anyone to teach for higher class. Higher class - how can we make it better ?

Maths and English the basic is so bad, so additional support for maths and English, from last year- and sure to be included this year as well. They have increased teachers salary. Now INR 2000 per teacher, all part time teacher. So we have food budget, and extra teacher support.

They take them for small excursion, rapid reading session they kind of do. Read and write fast -0 this is needed for every subject. They still do these workshops.

Raleigh research triangle park - give 1000-1500\$ each year.

Hijli one was also in WAH- it was very old Asha tradition, started in 1999 maybe. Pad coordinated in 2013, Asha wide campaign, used to be tradition. In 2014 it messed up with chapter events. Its that chapters submit projects, and raise awareness to that campaign and whatever money goes to that project.

Support a child (SAC) - we used to have for Trinita, Nistha, we made a group of kids, 120 kids, 8000\$, 70\$ per kid each year. So someone can support one child. Everyone wants to support ranked 1st-2nd child. Does not matter who. In Asha we try to avoid.

In other NGO he supports SAC, the NGO gives a face, but for

Atlanta has bad experience, in Trinita. American lady, wanted to put the kids out of their home, into another hostel- bad idea as we cannot say what's good for them. Someone external just because someone comes. We do not individualise.

Padmanava da has taught in a govt school and NGO as a volunteer- we cannot say we will change lives. We have to understand all these things, not give false promises. We go back to our own environment and we forget them.

How do we select donors Tapo asks. Pad says we do not give individual pictures, only group pictures. Sometimes cards.

Pad da- difficult to get internet connection, in govt schools, backdated area where school is located, we can have a dongle which works in 1mbps. Similar kind of condition. 2-3 computers, 100 kids, so touched the computer twice.

So we are trying to create the computer education to these kids.

Computers for Nistha- what was the story for Trinita, this lady who came to Trinita for 5 kids, she had a friend, documentary film maker. Started project called cross-stitch, by 3 things -English, computers, and 3rd is to kind them with some students in Georgia USA - empower

like that. Through computer they will do video chat and mentoring, connect them to outer world. Connect them to western world. Things were fine, not failure, they were doing Apple computers donated/macbooks, compared to windows in college/high school. Students were confused. So children became better with English speaking. They made a good video. Computer training was haphazard. He visited Trinita, it became too optimistic, Trinita started in 2002, when they started 200 kids to 2000 kids within 4 years, started becoming inefficient. Spending money not doing impact, teachers is there, lot of vocational training centre. For every project started vocational training, no matter how much we teach someone, they need to get employed, it actually much worse to be employed and uneducated. That is his viewpoint :

Pad says his theory, in our country if educated they have to do a certain kind of work., cannot become waiter, not give much respect. In USA, cannot disrespect someone based on their job. So if someone becomes waiter after class 12 that is not respected, but its 'better' to be waiter after class 2.

We hear about job posting, MS, PhD, MBA applying for jobs in India.

Vocational training without a vision is not good, every other person, study the need, need-assessment, and same model in rural area, where there is need of skills set, which might not work in a mega city. In small hamlets, Sunderbans, not in Kasba

ICTD project stopped, a lot of reasons these projects stopped.

Nistha we can start the practice center for computers, a plan in mind of who will support them, what we want to get out of that. They will play games. Unless there is a goal, or someone will track them, or monitor them. That may not be very helpful. The situation, at 16-17 they fall in love or parents marry them off. At that age, they are not sure of what they want.

Similar to vocational training, knitting - for whole life they would not want to do that., from 2001 we have this chapter. Abhyuday from 2003, Padma da 2006, should not repeat mistakes of past, at the same time should not be bothered about bad experience.

Tapo- 3 questions :

1. These are backup centers, not mainstream schools, kids who dropout of schools?

Pad says, all students go to free govt school. Maybe few students go to private schools, 200 Rupees a month fees there. In govt school teaches teach to 4-5 kids in front row, not everyone,

2. Asha is a mediator, donors donate to Asha, and Asha send to inspiration, and some donors directly (50-50 divide)

3. In report, 105 students, only 2 people gave madhyamik, why are they not giving madhyamik?

Pad says, class 9 onward these teachers cannot give support, so class 9 onwards, Pad says in Bangalore they have to be given scholarships

They do not get free books, they do not get meals, Rs 1000-2000 a year, or 6000 INR a year, out of that 2000-3000 for books and uniforms, other is for merit scholarship. SBI - joint account. 4.

4. Tapo asks - Students who drop out after class 8, what do they do ?

Pad says they mostly do business.- they enter a business, or megastores, only young people, middle aged people. Young people doing cabs, etc. graduates have become cab drivers. Majority goes to shops, do small business, they do not get other jobs - banks/service, which they need to do diploma and join them. If somehow they can pass class 10, they can do PUC.

Girl in Nistha - education so that they do not want to be cheated this is recurring theme.

no one wants to be a farmer. This is in West Bengal, compared to Karnataka, Pad da friends, There is a cultural difference, he goes in weekend and takes care of farming things, he plans the farming cycles, when to buy seeds and lot of things like that.

Wide scale migration to city, they flock to the city in higher hopes, why cannot they stay in their same thing. A lot of West Bengal come to Bangalore, and they have 8 years and then they want to go back .

BACK TO INSPIRATION - how to track these kids do after class 8-9 or class 10. Track the headmasters, to talk to these class 9-10 kids, give them a path, career consulting, incentive to continue, that might be scholarship.

Personal thing of Pad is -they have to get diploma, there is scarcity of jobs, at least not be limited by your qualification. May not get the job you want.

All these DON BOSCO and all trying to make these unorganized sector into organized. Any security guard, comes through consulting companies, who have a pool of people. When you say we need these many people, they are trained properly. Our goal- we cannot change them, we try to get them at a level at where INSPIRATION is GOOD AT, after that how should we guide them for next step. Neither me-you, nor INSPIRATION, someone better in employment. INSIPRATION is better at teaching, we are PhD students.

Pad says -out of 120 kids, 70-80% people become diploma holder.

Small govt school much worse, small private school little better, big goct school again better.

INSPIRATION trains teacher, but these teachers are housewife, locals seeing this as extra income.

The students class 8, then they can work (as per law), and also govt support stops after class 8. So thats a double problem.

DO WE HAVE PARENTS AWARENESS PROGRAM ?

- Eg, child used to help uncle in bedding business, earning 2000Rs a month, finance his own college education.

In trinita girls of age group of 13-19. We can find gilrs drpping out/biys dropoing out, how can we keep them in schools, can we start a scholarship in school.

Can we match the money he is earning,

Pad says we have to be fair to everyone - scholarship program in bangalore, 10,000 Rs, for got college cost.

QUESTIONS -

1. What do the students do after class 8, what they think can be done to improve the situation and retain more people at least till class 10 and 12 for now ?
2. What can we do to make parents more aware about the value of education ? How effective is the parent awareness program currently ?
3. How to setup a support program that also somehow guides them to get employed / make them more employable after they pass Class 10 / get a diploma ?
4. How to make sure that teachers are more effective in teaching kids / How to make sure that the students are actually learning ?
5. How can we balance the monetary and other rewards so that parents actually motivate the children to continue the education after Class 8, instead of they getting employed elsewhere and earning money while discontinuing education ?