



**DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE HOSTEL FOR WOMEN,
PARADESIPALEM, BHEEMUNIPATNAM MANDAL,
VISAKHAPATNAM, A.P.**

An Impact Assessment of CSR Initiative of Divi's





Divi's Laboratories Ltd.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT OF EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

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Report Prepared by
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BETTER FACILITIES – BETTER PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

Historically, there is a gap in development and a degree of exclusion from growth among specific social and economic groups, such as scheduled castes, tribes, backward classes, minorities, women, differently abled, etc., due to social marginalization, lack of resources, isolation, deprivation, gender and social discrimination. These vulnerable groups lack the skills and confidence to engage in community decision-making due to the historical exclusion and asymmetry in gender relations. Therefore, support mechanisms designed, to specifically target marginalized groups in order to ensure that they can participate, are necessary. To address the gaps in development of these groups, proactive engagement and action with special focus on their welfare and empowerment is critical.

Social empowerment is an intense process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and individual or collective action towards social change. Education is seen as an effective tool towards empowerment and overcome all forms of deprivation and marginalization. But the groups living in poverty, remote habitations, facing continued subjugation and systemic inequalities lack educational opportunities, especially the women, despite their aspirations to achieve heights. Residential facilities become pertinent to enable these aspiring young women to overcome their hurdles and pursue their education. Hostels are one such facility created by the Governments to enhance educational opportunities of women from these vulnerable sections.

CONTEXT

Hostel life expands the social circle of the students, because it has a combination of multicultural social group and hence considered as a human practical laboratory. Human personality is shaped by the experiences of life. It prepares students to accept challenges in practical life. Individual differences are also common among the hostel roommates.

In this context providing proper hostel facilities and ensuring safety are very important to enable women students to access the facility without hesitation and avail the educational opportunities for their overall development. Integrated Welfare Hostel Complex is one such facility that provides residential facility to the women students from different social backgrounds. Divi's contributed

towards improvement of facilities and quality living conditions in one such hostels located in Paradesipalem in Bheemunipatnam mandal, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

DIVI'S CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Divi's Laboratories is a leading manufacturer of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) with its headquarters located in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, Telangana, India. Divi's strong belief in the Business-Society Ecosystem forms the basis for its CSR component. Its philanthropic activities began within a few years of establishing its business in 1990, in the communities around the manufacturing site and gradually expanded to the larger sections of the needy and underserved.

Corporate Social Responsibility at Divi's is a mixture of charitable programs and community service to environmental-impact awareness. Over the years, Divi's community building efforts have contributed to the social and economic well-being of the weaker sections of the society. Promoting education, safe drinking water, preventive health care, rural development, animal welfare, empowering women remain some of the key priority areas for Company's CSR activities.

SERVING THE UNDERPREVILIGED

In the area of *Promoting Education*, Divi's not only supports the schools in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education but also extending its support to the residential facilities, in other words the hostels, where students from remote villages join to pursue their education in various faculties. Infrastructure development, providing basic amenities and improving the facilities are some of the activities in the direction of enabling young adults, especially the girl students, from weaker sections of the community to continue their education without interruption and overcome their social deprivation.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

As per the rules and regulations of Government of India regarding the CSR component of the Companies one has to undertake impact assessment study by a third party. In compliance with it, Divi's has empaneled "Deksha" – Centre for Learning and Action (a non-profit organization working in the areas of Child Rights, Adolescence issues, Health, Livelihoods and Gender equality) to take up the impact assessment of the works done at Integrated Welfare Hostel Complex (IWHC).

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Committing to the core value of empowering the marginalized, Divi's has spent some of its CSR funds to renovate the Integrated Welfare Hostel Complex of social welfare department meant for college going girls from disadvantaged sections, located at Paradesipalem, Bheemunipatnam mandal of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh. To understand the utility of the improved facilities and its impact on the students' quality of life it is intended to take up the assessment study.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

The core objective is to assess the impact of the CSR funds expended on development of IWHC.

METHODOLOGY

The study is designed to analyse and understand the impact by interacting with the resident students, caretakers and the concerned officials.

The study tools include Small Group Discussions (SGD), Observation and free-flowing interactions. Besides, interaction with the Project staff from Divi's was also included to get their perspective on the interventions.

SAMPLE

The sample included 10% of the total strength of the students for conducting the small group discussion using snowball sampling method, and all the caretakers for free-flowing interaction.

FINANCIAL OUTLAY

The amount spent towards its CSR initiative in the IWHC(W), Paradesipalem, Bheemunipatnam was ₹.1,45,37,019.00

LIMITATIONS

All the residents of the hostel are college going and they have different timings as they attend various colleges in the city. Hence the visit was planned in the evening time with an intention to meet as many women as possible to get the actual sense of the impact. However, the study team was told that it will be late in the evening by the time the students reach the hostel given the

distances from the colleges that they attend. Hence, the study team had to interact with the small number of students available in the hostel and willing to participate in the SGD without considering the sample size. Initially stratified sampling method was planned but given the conditions snowball method has to be used to get the sample subjects.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

The study team visited the IWHC, Paradesipalem and interacted with the hostelers, besides observing the utility and functionality of the facilities provided. Following are the key observations made by the Assessment Team:

- The hostel is accommodating about 100 women students studying in different colleges in different streams. Majority of the students belongs to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes hailing from remote rural and tribal villages of not only nearby mandals but also from the other parts of the erstwhile Visakhapatnam district.
- Many of these young women mentioned that they had previous experience of staying in hostel during their schooling but this hostel is totally different from their earlier experience. Their earlier experience was mostly of residential schools, whereas the IWHC is a residential facility for the college going young women. They attend their colleges in different locations during the day and reach back to the hostel for residential purpose.
- Few of the first-year students informed that the hostel was in bad shape when they joined and they were reluctant to stay here and almost thought of shifting to paying guest facility though it is not viable for them given their economic conditions. But soon after their joining renovation work started. Initially they thought it was department's initiative but lately came to know that it was Divi's intervention in support of girls' education. They were thankful to Divi's for making the facility pleasant.
- Civil works were taken up to renovate the dining hall, bathrooms, toilets and replacing the entry doors of the washrooms section. Plumbing work was done cleaning the drainage pipes and water pipes. Handwash sinks in the dining hall were repaired replacing the plastic outlet pipes and water taps.
- Cement benches and dining platforms, all with granite top, are constructed in the dining hall giving a decent and luxury look. Earlier they used to sit on the floor and eat. Cleaning of the

hall used to be a task every time the food is served. The new facility resolved not only these practical issues but also impacted positively on certain gender issues as an unintended result.

Sitting on the floor to eat was difficult during periods time. Some of us used to skip second serving to avoid stand-ups and sit-downs... it used to be so uncomfortable. But with the sitting arrangement with fixed benches and tables we feel relaxed while eating. Cleaning also became very easy and the dining hall now looks clean and tidy, always!! Many thanks to Divi's

- A 3rd year Nursing Student

- Electrical wiring and electrical fittings were totally replaced across the building. It included switch boards, switches, light holders and fans in the dining hall. Additional lights and fans were provided in the rooms where the women stay.
- The walk way in the front area of the hostel between the main gate and the main entrance of the building was cemented. Students were very happy because this patio helped them to control the mud coming inside the building whenever they come from outside, particularly during the rainy season.
- On both sides of the patio, one foot height border wall was constructed controlling the soil from spilling on the cemented area during the rains and while watering the plants. There is empty space on both sides of this place where a garden was developed by Divi's. The border wall between the garden and the cemented area is wide enough to sit and the students sometimes relax here chatting and spending free time listening to their favourite songs, a few students mentioned.
- There is one handpump in the hostel which was used by the hostellers for washing their clothes but due to repair they had to wash their clothes in the bathrooms itself or had to carry water outside for washing clothes. Repairing this handpump helped them in overcoming the problem of blocking washrooms for longer duration which used to be a problem earlier.
- A walk way is constructed from the main gate till the handpump making it convenient to reach to the handpump. Otherwise, it used to be all mud and sludge during rainy season or even when it was watered. Since it is black soil, it used to be slippery when the soil is too damp making it difficult to carry buckets with washed clothes or water from the handpump.

- Construction of a platform around the hand pump has been convenient and it is spacious enough to sit and wash their clothes and the women were extremely delighted to have it. They shared that earlier they had to stand in the mud and wash clothes which was a pain. But now the cement platform is very comfortable to sit and wash clothes. The water also runs out easily now with the channel provided for the purpose leaving no chance for water stagnation and thereby restricting the breeding of mosquitos.
- A ramp was also constructed on one side of the steps in front of the building to enable easy mobility of the persons with walking disability and wheelchair movement.
- As shared by the students, earlier the rooms had kadapa stone and cement flooring. It used to look dark with low lighting. Bathrooms used to look shabby. Now the flooring of all the rooms was properly tiled including the bathrooms. Students said, it is easy for them to clean their rooms – dusting or mopping.
- Doors and windows of the rooms and dining hall were repaired and many had to be replaced, especially the bathroom doors. In some of the rooms the window frames were also replaced as they were not shutting properly, through which the mosquitos and rats used to enter the rooms giving tough times to the residents of these rooms.
- The participants were particularly happy with the additional fans and lights provided in their rooms. Earlier there used to be one fan and two lights in the 20 x 20 size room. Currently, the rooms are well-lit and the distribution of air is good with two fans per room.
- There used to be fights among the room-mates in one or the other room, students shared. But with more lighting now they are able to study comfortably and additional fan in every room solved the problem of petty fights, they laughed. They say, *everyone is sleeping well now!*
- The slab of the building had uneven surface in some places and it caused water stagnation on the roof during rainy times. It used to gradually seep into the ceiling of the rooms making it damp. During the renovation work the slab was also repaired and Divi's team did not leave it there but went ahead and treated the roof top with water proof material ensuring no further seepage of water from the slab. Women shared that they got rid of the unpleasant smell and unhealthy dampness they had to face for months together during rainy season and later too.
- The entire building was painted by Divi's giving it a new look. The rooms are brighter and pleasant with the new painting and reflection of lighting with additional lights inside the rooms.

Students mentioned delightfully that the look of their hostel building has entirely changed with all the repairs, replacements, improvements and additions.

- A final year B.Tech student shared her experience staying in the hostel for past four years. “We used to always carry pencils or pens in our hair knots to use to put on / off the light and fan switches. If we were alone, we used to avoid using switches, instead we used cell phone torch, due to the fear of electrocution as the wires used to hang out and the switches used to be dropping. In some boards there were no switches but only empty space showing the inside wiring. There were incidents of electrical shock, especially during rainy days. There were no sufficient plug points to charge our mobiles... we were like unwanted and it used to be disrespectful... now we have a transformed environment! Living here gives us a feeling of dignity and value”.
- The study team observed that the maintenance is poor due to which the drainage system is giving troubles. It is getting blocked often as the rats and bandicoots dig the mud blocking the pipelines. These creatures are coming from the neighbouring plots that are vacant. Minimising food wastage and maintaining wastebins in sufficient sizes and quantity is one option to address the issue. Digging soakage pits and allowing the water to seep into the ground is another option. However, drainage system needs a revamp.
- There are two women cooks who are also the caretakers of the students in the hostel. On the day of the visit one cook was on leave and the watchman was also not around. There is no scavenger provision which is leading to the main problem. Students hurriedly get ready in the morning leaving soap covers, used shampoo sachets and other such waste material inside and around the washrooms. This is also contributing to blockages in the pipelines. When brought to the notice of the students, they felt little shy and admitted that they shouldn't be doing this. Responding to the query of the study team on student committees they agreed to form different sub-committees to maintain hygiene and cleanliness in the hostel premises.
- The study team could not interact with the Principal as she was not available at the time of the visit.
- The senior students act as mentors to the newly joined women and they support each other since they are aware of their vulnerabilities and the struggles they faced to reach till here. Hence, they all sounded strong and powerful with a spirit to achieve something.

- Most of them expressed that the food taste is not good though the cook can prepare good food, which they do so occasionally. But the improved facilities and the better environment is making them ignore the food taste as they got used to hostels earlier also... they just recall their goal and the invaluable support that Divi's provided to enable them to head towards the goal.

AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

- The study team observed that there is no provision to dry their washed clothes in the sun, which is an issue of personal health. Providing fixed hangers with strings would contribute greatly to personal hygiene and health matters.
- There is good open space in the middle of the hostel building. Laying 6 to 8 benches in that area would create a more conducive environment for the students to study in the open light and air. Also, for relaxing and building friendships that encourage a hormonal living.
- The hostel is located about 200 meters inside from the main road which is a good location. However, lack of streetlights and crossing empty plots filled with bushes are a concern of safety for the young women who return late from the long-distanced colleges. Providing two streetlights would make a lot of difference.
- There is an APSRTC request bus-stop on the main road where these women students wait to catch buses or get dropped after the college. But it has no shelter because it is not a heavily used bus stop, and many a times buses are stopped based on the whims and fancies of the driver. Almost all the students appealed to consider providing a bus-shelter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fixing a day for clean and green programme inside and outside the hostel, in consultation with the hostellers, for few weeks regularly and gradually fading out by completely handing over to the team nominated for the purpose would serve towards young women leadership in future and have better living conditions in the present.

- A monthly intervention by Divi's volunteers to involve the hostelers in community development service would pave a path to many of the young women there to become committed community volunteers.
- One of the repeated requests from the students was skill building training.
- Since many of these young women are pursuing their nursing or lab-technician course they requested to provide opportunity to work with Divi's as apprentice. This will have two-fold benefit – one, training new generation on values and ethics-filled working mindset; two, creating employment opportunities or employability skills so that the women from marginalised sections would break the stereotypes and join the country's economic growth. Divi's management may take a call on it.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the students were extremely happy for the renovations and improvements done in the hostel. Majority being from remote rural and tribal villages they had no other option but to stay in the IWHC, which was their last option. After Divi's intervention they feel cared and valued despite the challenges they face in the hostel and outside. As shared by the students, it has a greater impact on their education performance, their societal outlook and their perspective towards community service. This can be further improved and sustained with forming and nurturing functional students' committees in this type of hostels.

Thus, the intervention of Divi's spending its CSR funds to develop the IWHC need to be acknowledged for practicing the true sense of Corporate Social Responsibility objectives. Appreciating this, the study team feels that the onus is also on the management of the hostel and the concerned department to take the spirit forward and make the efforts sustainable.

This is my second year in this hostel. When I joined, I got frightened... it was terrible... I almost gave up my studies... wanted to go back home. I was sad, I know how much I had to fight to come here. But those days were gone. A completely transformed hostel I am living in now. Very happy that we got Divi's to support us. I told others in my village and relatives to join this hostel.

- A 2nd year B.Com student from Chintapalli

PHOTO GALLERY



Pic 1 – Social Welfare Hostel Building at Paradesipalem



Pic 2 – Ramp and Steps leading into the Hostel



Pic 3 & 4 – Renovated Dining Hall with new Fans



Pic 5 – New Flooring with Vitrified Tiles inside the Hostel



Pic 6 – Tiled Flooring in the Corridor in front of the rooms



Pic 7 – Walkway to the Handpump



Pic 8 – Platform around the Handpump & Water Draining Channel



Pic 9 & 10 – Interaction with the Hosteler

A hostel is a passport to a world of shared experiences and everlasting connections

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