

ASHRAM STORIES

Tiles told by and about Grandmas

Part 1 and Part 2

SUMMARY POINTS



M.D . Swapna

ASHRAM AJJI STORIES – in brief

Abstract- Asha [aka Ashram aiji] was in charge of about 100 persons in her ashram – it was under the care of some 10 *didis* [- sisters, *akka* in Kannada] each running like an independent home unit with a small number of members. Certain mottos were told and maintained in common for ALL ashramites.

Background

A true social worker meets with problems in a number of institutions : 1. Child adoption centre 2, beggars' home 3, terminal care patients' centre 4. Slum rehabilitation scheme 5. Working women's hostel 6. Students counselling . She quits one by one and then finds a government home for destitute quite good but bound by too many procedures . Finally she establishes an ashram [non-religious] with autonomy in all matters.

SUMMARY POINTS [IN RANDOM ORDER]

1. didis were home makers full time voluntarily joined ashram
2. Asha says: for female employees four hours work per day even with less pay is ideal
3. Any item distributed [most importantly food] to be tested [tasted!] by responsible authorities [here ashra or the concerned didi]
- 4, Children to write diary- even young ones, oral, written with elders' help.
5. Neat and pressed clothes – well-kept appearance.
6. Read something, anything available, other than textbooks
7. Reading material provided by the institution- a library.
8. Learn to read for yourself silently – also to read aloud clearly
9. During power-cut keep busy together – create purposely 'dark days'
10. Anticipate seasons and events – school opening

11. Be ready for and enjoy the monsoon
12. Adjust to local climate all the year
13. All children and adults must learn swimming or at least not drowning for a while.
14. See around nearby and the town
15. Educational or enjoyable exposure [outing] to outside – start with railway station
16. Ashramites visit and learn about 'standard' homes [nice and willing ones] and if possible vice versa
17. Sing together. Keep a personal song book
- 18 Administrators [adm] can keep a suggestion box
19. Adm can appoint a few elder children to help very young ones to put their ideas
20. Donors are encouraged to come only on specific days [once a month!]
21. No precooked, stored, left-over foods allowed as donation
22. Newsletter [by adm monthly or quarterly] – modern times it can be a website updating.
23. Annual journal with everyone's creations – all ages all languages, all forms [prose, poem, sketch, art, photo ...]
24. Weekly digest of news to be displayed – adm to compile – only the desirable info or data
25. Visit places nearby or not too far if possible
- 26 Do mental tourism to many even far away places [where/ how/ what will you do there?]
27. Alumni association PLUS group of well-wishers and volunteers
28. One common day [once a year] for all concerned
29. Discussion and consultation [brain storming] about current work and immediate plans
- 30 All distributions to be done with dignity- no lining up beggar like with cupped hands

31. Abnormal likes and food habits to be avoided – no extreme aversions- take only as much as you want- no wastage of food

32. Adm to prepare teens for independent life later – step by step

33. For 32 above to stand on one's own two feet -both skill education and personal qualities

34 For 32 and 33 above see checklist at the end

35. Health, physical fitness stressed

36. Ideas for library, museum, workshop, typewriter [modern times computer room]

37. Ashramites encouraged to voluntarily join wherever they can. Adult literacy, health awareness, environment etc. 38 see check list below

LIST TO BE TICKED

[details in office files]

1. *Travel local - going with 1 or 2 inmates by local bus, train etc. Tickets, stop or station names to be noted and reported.*
2. *1 above alone and with a job assignment*
3. *A day- time travel to a given place and address and back the same day just as 1 and 2 above*
4. *Same as 3 but travel overnight.*
5. *Go as a group for lunch/ snacks to a friendly 'standard' house. Go alone to a house for helping someone sick or prepare for a function or festival – join for a weekend with a 'standard' family.*
6. *Make a fully imaginary bio data- also make a real one with one's own name*
7. *While in the ashram complete an apprentice program for a short period – do the above staying outside*

Asha very much stressed the last item of the above list.