

**ASHA DEEP WELFARE SOCIETY (REGD.)
JAHAN KHELAN, HOSHIARPUR**

TEMPLE FOR MENTALLY CHALLENGED

J.S.S. ASHA KIRAN SPECIAL SCHOOL, JAHAN KHELAN, HOSHIARPUR

Having a baby is the happiest moment in married life provided the child is normal. The parents of mentally & physically impaired kids are always under pervasive stress, depression, sadness & agony. They need sympathy, co-operation, guidance and institutional & human assistance for rehabilitation of their wards.

Mental retardation is a condition of incomplete development of mind. It is less understood or misunderstood while the other disabilities are identified at a glance. The population with mental retardation is more than 3% of the world population. The task to bring up such kids is very difficult but can be made easier if responsibilities of the parents are shared by others. They can be substantially improved by early identification, evaluation and training. It requires a lot of patience, dedication and special technique used by the trained staff. Voluntary and social organizations can play a pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of distressed society. Mankind is above all the religions.

There was no such place/school in Hoshiarpur for training of mentally challenged children. Keeping this in view a few philanthropists of Hoshiarpur formed a body under the name of 'Asha Deep Welfare Society' under the President ship of Sh. Teg Pal Singh.

The Society is registered under Society Act XXI 1860 vide no 648 dated 01-07-1995/1996. It is also registered under section 53 Of PD Act 1995 vide Directorate of Social Security, Govt. of Punjab No. 19-03-1999 and with National Trust, Govt. of India vide no 1910/HR/2002 dated 11-04-2002.

Thus a special school was opened by the Society under the name of 'Asha Kiran Special School' for education, training & rehabilitation of mentally retarded children on 1st May, 1995 with aims and objects as under:

1. To Educate and train the mentally challenged children to self reliance.
2. To help every mentally challenged child to grow into a self reliant person by providing diagnostic facilities through camps and home visits.
3. To train them in vocations and crafts for rehabilitation and employment.
4. To educate parents and the community through regular counseling and involving them in various rehabilitation activities.

It was started in one room with one chair and two benches provided by Smt. Tripta Devi Sud and Dr. Shiv Charan Dass Sud Trust, opposite D.A.V. Sr. Sec. School, Hoshiarpur with two staff members. There were four children to start with. The number increased within a short span of time. Need for some large place was felt. At that time another philanthropist Sh. Om Parkash Sood was approached. He offered rent free accommodation at Thakur Dass Sood Sarai, Una Road, Hoshiarpur. The school was shifted to that building in the year 1997 but with the increase in the number of children the building was again, found insufficient to accommodate children and staff. The management was in search of a piece of land to build its own school building. Then with the kind co-operation of Late Col. A.S. Gill and Sarpanch Sh. Jugal Kishore of Gram Panchayat Jahan Khelan we got one acre of land free of cost for construction of the school building in the year 2002 and the construction started.

Sh. Paramjit Singh Sachdeva contributed a considerable amount for the construction of school building in the memory of his late father and as such the name of the school was changed to "Jagjit Singh Sachdeva Asha Kiran Special School, Jahan Khelan, Hoshiarpur" in December 2008.

Society has now multi-storey school building having 10,000 sq. ft. plinth area at ground floor and 10,000 sft each at first floor and second floor. In addition to stairs, building is having facility of 'Lift' for handicapped children. This huge construction could be possible with the donations from public. Many donors have constructed rooms in the name of their beloved ones. Major contribution came from Sh. Paramjit Singh Sachdeva and his Business Associates, M.P. LAD Funds, M.L.A.s, Businessmen/ Industrialists, NRIs and individuals. All rooms are fitted with AC/ Coolers.

It is equipped with adequate furniture, T.V. Sets, CD/DVD Player, Music/ sound system, CVS Cameras, Computers, Xerox Machine, Electronic Attendance machine etc. School has well equipped Physiotherapy centre fitted with latest machines operated under a qualified & trained Physiotherapist proving an encouraging results. Similarly there is a Speech therapy centre being run under qualified teacher. It is also having facility of fully equipped Library maintained by a Librarian. It has its psychology lab & Resource room.

It has large open space, beautiful garden and maintained ground. Special school also provide opportunity for mentally challenged children to participate in games, for which otherwise they are deprived off. Playing is an integral part of the development of children as it involve love, cooperation and co-ordination with other players. The special children are provided training in playing various games/ events by qualified coaches. Resultantly they win number of Gold, Silver & Bronze medals in District, State, National & Inter-National games. One of our player namely Sh. Sukhwinder Singh has even won Silver Medal in Winter Special Olympic Games-2013, held at Korea. Similarly one student namely Jasvir Singh won Gold Medal in Floor hockey in Special winter Olympic held at viana, Austria. Special Olympic, Punjab Chapter were held thrice at Hoshiarpur in 2000, 2010 and 2014. Similarly they are provided training in cultural activities to which they like much and earn appreciation in public/ society in district level function held on republic and independence day. State level competition of cultural activities by special children are arranged and winner are honoured by cash prizes. The competition of Year 2017 was held at Hoshiarpur. Society/ School is also running a Sheltered Workshop where special children get training and work on different jobs like candle making, Masala Grinding, making kitchen napkins, Liquid cleaner, Emboj Painting, Ordinary & Shagun envelopes, Greeting cards, Punching & Tagging etc. One Donor has donated two Aggarbathi Machines imported from Vietnam and after providing training, manufacturing of Aggarbathies has been started. They also work and help on photo stat machine and telephone attendant and also as office helper. Trained/ semi-trained children are paid some stipend for their encouragement. Society also help for their placement wherever it may be possible.

Starting the school with just four children in the year 1995, the enrollment has now gone to 170 including home based guided children. It has also hostel facility for residential children. The school has an experienced Principal and dedicated staff.

There has been constant shortage of trained staff. Keeping this in mind, Rehabilitation Council of India has allowed to start two years diploma course (D.Ed) in special education which is in operation since 2011 with yearly intake of thirty students. Also Rehabilitation Council of India has sanctioned 30 seats in B.Ed (Special) and it has affiliation with Punjab University, Chandigarh. Its first session was started from August 2014. This is the first such institution of Punjab University in State of Punjab. The school/ Institute has also the facility of hostel for girl students in D.Ed. & B.Ed. classes. Hostel is well furnished air condition. Fee concession is provided for school as well as hostel to the parents of special children who cannot afford. Society has planning to start D.Ed. Special in ASD & CP from next session i.e. 2016-17. Similarly starting M.Ed. special (MR. from 2016-17) is also under process. We are also in search of place for starting special school for Hearing and Visual Impaired children because this facility is not available in this part of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

The school has its own transport vehicles. Children are picked up from city and villages in school transport and adequate relief is provided to the deserving candidates in transport charges. At present school has two Mini-Buses, one Tata-Winger & two Tata-Magic Pick- ups. The Tata-Mini Buses were donated by SBI and other three vehicles donated by Sh. Paramjit Singh Sachdeva family.

The parents of the mentally challenged children are under constant fear as to who will take care of these children after their own death. Keeping in view this problem Asha Deep Welfare Society is setting up another project namely An Alternative Shelter Residential Area (AASRA). In the beginning Special hostel for housing mentally challenged children of age between 15-30 years. Process has also started for taking over responsibility of keeping such person for whole life upto their rites under scheme (AASRA) by the Society in a separate beautiful complex at Kakkon providing all comforts/ facilities required for good living. A sheltered workshop is also being set up there also in addition to education & games facility.

The school is managed by Asha Deep Welfare Society which consists of fifteen Governing Body members and sixteen General House Members which include professional people like

Doctors, Engineers, Advocates, Businessmen & Social workers, who are deeply involves in this project.

The monthly expenditure including salary of staff, annual maintenance, telephone/ electricity bills, transportation, mid-day meals works out to Rs.3.50 lac approximately which is met with donations and meager grant-in-aid from Govt. of India usually received years after. Entire staff in covered under Employee's Provident Fund scheme w.e.f. 1st April, 2015.

In the end, we appeal to the businessmen, industrialists, professionals & public in general living in this country and abroad to donate generously for this noble cause.

All donations are eligible for tax rebate under section 80-G of the Income Tax Act. For further details please visit our website www.jssashakiran.org. you can also join us on www.facebook.com/jssashakiran our email address: jssashakiran@gmail.com

Our School became India's first ISO 9001:2008 certified Special School in August 2011.

The essence of life is to help the ailing society.

Dated: 14/07/2017