

ASHA KA JHARNA

Annual Activity Report (March 2010- March 2011)

March 2010 to May 2010

Following are the important activities undertaken during this reporting period apart from regular special education and allied services:

BTE Hearing Aid Distribution: A major breakthrough was achieved when 176 children with hearing and speech impairment from our region consisting of three districts got a valuable gift of a pair of high quality **Behind the Ear** hearing aid along with mould and one year supply of batteries (Market Value 117000 US Dollar) courtesy **Starkey Hearing Foundation, USA**. At a simple function held at Jaipur on 28th March our persistent efforts since last six months paid off. Now their hearing capability is vastly improved with distortion free sound entering their ears. Special educators have reported better reception and communication with these children resulting in enhanced learning.

Health Insurance Cover: 'NIRAMAYA' is a scheme by National Trust, New Delhi under which medical health covers of Rs. One lac is provided to the persons with developmental disabilities. Since its launch two years ago, we are actively enrolling the beneficiaries from our region. Till May, total of 249 children has been provided smart cards for cashless insurance at empanelled hospitals.

Children Excursion: Two picnics were organized at Lohargal (Religious cum Natural scenic place 30 K.M. from Nawalgarh) and a local garden in which children enjoyed, played and relished snacks. These outings enabled sensory stimulation of special needs children.

Special Olympics Games: On 10th April, District level Special Olympics Games were held at Chirawa in which our children participated and won medals. Simultaneously **Healthy Smile Campaign** was organized where a team of dentists checked their teeth, gave tips on oral hygiene and also distributed toothpaste & brush to each child.

Annual Exams: Though we assess continuously the progress made during IETP (Individualized Education and Training Programme), annual exams for level A (Class 3) , level B (Class 5) and level C (Class 8) conducted by National Institute of Open Schooling, Noida aimed at certification of the children were held from 19th to 24th April . Total of 39 children (10 from Nawalgarh unit) wrote these exams. Result is awaited.

Donation of Computers: Acceding to our long felt demand, CISCO Systems Bangalore donated 12 old used computers to Asha Ka Jharna. These systems are fast enough for our need and specialized software. Now we are in the process of starting basic IT skill enhancement course for persons with disabilities.

State NGO Consultative Meeting: On 11th May, state level deliberations of all the NGO's working in disability field were held under the chairmanship of principal secretary, Deptt. of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of Rajasthan, Jaipur. During the daylong meeting various issues including disability certificates, accessibility, education, employment were raised and promised to be look after by the govt. We highlighted the need of including disability related questions in the ongoing census so that a correct perspective is made available for the society and all stake holders.

Staff Training Workshop: During the children summer vacations, we organize training sessions every year. One week workshop from 26th to 31st May was conducted at Nawalgarh in which renowned experienced resource persons from Asha Kiran, Tatanagar (Jharkhand) shared their experiences with our staff members. Topics ranging from early intervention, behavior management, class room settings, IETP making tools, reinforcement, inclusive education, record keeping, lesson planning, co-curricular activities etc. were discussed so as to apprise them about latest techniques.

June 2010 to August 2010

Summer Activities: As the children were on one month summer break, staff spent time on making TLM (Teaching and Learning Material); preparation of assessment modules; record keeping; refurbishing the class rooms; community visits and other ancillary activities.

Updation of Survey: Staff members underwent fifteen days door to door survey of the town and surrounding villages to identify and assess special needs. Their families were counseled upon to accept the situation and take corrective measures. Seven new children have been enrolled from this academic session onwards.

Declaration of NIOS Results: All our appearing children passed out their respective levels with flying colours when NIOS results were declared in first week of July. This National Board Certification while boosting morale also highlight their potential.

Children Exposure Visit: After reopening the school, children were taken for a picnic where they enjoyed the swings and slides. They also relished the delicious lunch there.

Sensitization of Visitors: Two groups of foreign college students visited AKJ Where they experienced the special education first hand and were briefed about the disability scenario in India generally and in our region particularly. After the visit these young scholars were more receptive to our cause.

Review Meetings of Foundation Course: Two important meetings for stock taking of foundation course (National Programme to train Govt. teachers to educate children with special needs in mainstream schools) was held at Jaipur in which thorough brainstorming sessions were conducted. While IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) meeting cleared the procedural bottlenecks; SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) meeting framed the targets and time frames to cover maximum teachers. Our vocal stand in both deliberations to streamline this ambitious project was acknowledged and appreciated.

Evolution of Rajasthan State Disability Policy: As part of Chief Minister budget speech, series of workshops were held by **Department of Social Justice & Empowerment** to conceive the maiden draft policy for the welfare of disabled. Key stakeholders were invited. Asha Ka Jharna represented ourselves by sending a child with hearing impairment; special educator and secretary in various sessions. We put forward realistic scenario of special population in the state. Key suggestions given are: Focus on economic rehabilitation; Ensuring Full coverage of social benefits; Putting up safeguards for accountability.

Celebrations: During the reporting period, Independence Day function and Raksha Bandhan festival were celebrated in the schools with audience from local community present.

October 2010 to March 2011

Children Welfare Activities:

(i) During the reporting period; due to extreme weather conditions prevailing here; woolen sweaters and blankets were distributed to the children besides one set of school uniform.

(ii) All children are also getting daily nutritional supplements like milk, seasonal fruit, jaggery products, sweets, hot cereals and cooked food by rotation.

(iii) Children are being provided pick and drop facility from their homes to school through five autos and public transport means. In December only, one auto was hired for Mukundgarh, a village 16 K.Ms. away from Nawalgarh from where seven children (4 hearing Impaired; 3 mentally challenged) which were shortlisted during recent survey are now regularly receiving our services.

(iv) Stationery and other learning aids are also being provided to children.

Regional Parents Meet: 'Asha Ka Jharna' being the member organization of 'PARIVAAR' – A national federation of parents association, represented itself at 'Regional Parents Meet' held at Shimla. Various issues regarding empowerment of parents and avenues available to them for their special wards were discussed. It was stressed upon to form a common platform to demand better deal from Government and local bodies.

CISCO IT Essentials Master Training Module: In order to rehabilitate economically, vocational training is must. We conceived a basic hardware maintenance course for which a MOU was signed with CISCO Systems. Our computer instructor completed one week master trainer module at CISCO Academy Jaipur. Basic infrastructure, networking, internet connectivity were arranged. Our academy was activated by CISCO. Now we are about to start this course.

IGNOU Foundation Course: To augment the trained pool in the field of disability and to achieve the ambitious objective of universal primary education (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) we have been entrusted the responsibility of training Govt. teachers. Since last three years, 200 teachers have been enrolled into this foundation course through our study

centre. During October to December, another batch of 40 teachers got this vital training comprising of topics like identification, assessment, class room management, lesson plan making, assistive devices, behavior modification, counseling, reinforcement etc. They returned back to their schools better equipped and with compassionate skills.

D' AXIS Summit: One national summit propagating the social enterprise model was attended by us at Delhi.

National Trust Networking Meeting: A one day meeting of registered organizations in Rajasthan was organized by UMANG Jaipur in which more than 30 NGO's participated. This important event was graced by Chairperson, National Trust and Principal Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan. Overall disability scenario was discussed and suggestions to improve Govt. schemes were made. We raised the point of frequently changing policies and hardships being faced by special needs persons.

Special Olympics Signature Campaign: A massive exercise was undertaken by 'Special Olympics' world wide to discourage the phrase 'Retarded' (Ban the 'R' word) while referring to mentally challenged persons. In India stars like Akshay Kumar and Celina Jetti were the brand ambassadors. In Nawalgarh, we picked up this campaign and got 2542 signatures of various school children and teachers on the pledge thus sensitizing and making them aware of the cause.

Legal Rights Awareness: To apprise the guardians of the legal rights of PWD's in sync with UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) one lecture was organized with CJM explaining the rights.

Disability Quiz: In order to raise awareness among school children, one quiz was organized at Asha Ka Jharna in which questions related to disability were asked. Winners were given prizes and felicitated by the Chairperson, Nawalgarh Municipal Committee.

International Day for Disabled: 3rd December was observed as 'International Day for Disabled' with various activities planned. In order to integrate our children with their not so special counterparts we invited 100 primary school children from 10 regular schools. They mingled with our children and participated in events like 50 mtr. race,

spoon race, jalebi race, musical chair, painting & drawing, puzzle solving, memory game, designing cards on computer and cultural programme. This event was hugely successful with both special and normal children taking part keenly and applauding each other winning. Chairperson, Municipal Committee; President, Lions Club and Manager, State Bank of India were among the guests of honour and cheering the achievements of young citizens.

Foreign Tourists Group Visits: Winters being the tourist season for our region, many foreign guests visited Asha Ka Jharna also besides their sightseeing. They were briefed about our work and taken around to the classes. While spending time with children and educators, visitors were overwhelmed with the kind and quality of our services with the minimum resources at hand. They recorded appreciation remarks in the visitor book.

Children Excursion: Children were taken to Vrindavan, a local scenic place where they enjoyed natural green surroundings, played outdoor games and relished delicious food.

Children Day Celebrations: Lions Club Nawalgarh organized a fancy dress competition on children's day in which Asha Ka Jharna children also participated and won special prizes.

National Badminton Coach Training Camp: One week training camp under the banner of Special Olympics was organized at Ludhiana where Rajasthan was represented by our nine children. They along with two special educators learnt the skills and game rules from SAI (Sports Authority of India) resource persons and national coaches. After the camp, our two children were picked up as very promising and are being now further groomed for next state games.

Dental and Health Checkup: Our children were taken on a periodic dental and general health checkup to GGIS (GEMS Gurukul International School) where dentist and physician examined them and gave oral hygiene and medical consultation. All children were given tooth paste and tooth brush.

Functions and Festivals: During the reporting period, all the important festivals and functions were celebrated with full zeal. New Year started with customary get together with children preparing snacks for the staff members and presenting the cultural programmes. On the Republic Day function, children presented a wide range of programmes which were appreciated by the local community.

Holi - Festival of colours was a special occasion this year as our children mingled with normal children of GEMS Gurukul International School and Govt. teachers who were undergoing foundation course on disability. It was a eye-opener for them who were simply over whelmed with the innocence and joy of special kids. Sweets were distributed and dance programme organized among various shades of Gulal colouring the environment.

Census Meeting : In order to create awareness among masses to include all special needs persons in the ongoing census 2011 exercise, a regional consultation meet with more then 300 participants from various NGO's working in disability sector was organized at AADI, New Delhi. 'Asha Ka Jharna' special educator participated there and expressed our views. We vowed to disseminate this information at the grassroot level.

Census Orientation Campaign: Immediately after returning from the consultations, we undertook a massive campaign throughout our district making professionals and general public aware of the census listing. Various meetings with aanganwadi workers, ANM's, govt. teachers, village sarpanchs, health workers and parents were organized throughout the month. It was stressed upon them that they must record all disabled persons into the census figures so that govt. may get correct perspective for designing policies and schemes accordingly. Total of 480 persons were sensitized. We hope to get more realistic figures when census data is out.

Uniforms Distribution: Children were given a pair of uniform and grains by the hand of Holy Saint from Vrindavan and prominent industrialist from Chennai who also blessed them a bright future.

Orientation Programme: A one day orientation session during aanganwadi training module was undertaken in which 40 of them were sensitized about the various aspects of disability; its identification among infants/ young children and intervention.

State Consultative Meeting on Framing New Disability Policy: In order to frame new disability policy (Which is pragmatic and in sync with changing dynamics, aspirations, legal framework UNCRPD compliant) all state governments have been organizing consultative sessions with civil society organizations. Rajasthan consultations were held at Jaipur on 04th March in which we participated and made vocal our suggestions. Shift from charity to rights model was advocated by us.

Hearing Aid Mould Measurement Camp: In continuation with our last year pioneer camp providing high quality 'Behind the ear' hearing aids to the needy children, we organized another camp this year in association with Starkey Hearing Foundation, USA. Wide publicity through media news, telecommunication to parents and convergence with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was done throughout two months leading to enhanced awareness. 134 hearing and speech impaired children from six districts gathered at the ear mould measurement camp. Audiologists from Starkey Laboratories (India) took the impressions for soft moulds. Now these will be provided BTE's hence gift of hearing during August – September at Jaipur.

Foundation Course on Disability: Another batch of 40 govt. teachers from five districts was imparted theoretical and practical training on various aspects to educate special needs children in inclusive setup. During the fourteen days spent here, teachers were highly moved and empathied with our cause. They also promised to look after these children in their surroundings.