

JYOTI SROAT SCHOOL, SHILLONG

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

How we started:

'Jyoti Sroat' means source of light. The school was born out of the concern of a few well meaning professionals and individuals of Shillong, for providing educational opportunities for children with visual impairment. The Society for Promotion of Eye Care and Sight (SPECS) founded by Dr. J.V. Basaiawmoit, with the expert advice of Sr. Rosario Lopez, the then President of Bethany Society, Meghalaya, established the first special school for the visually impaired in the city in 1993. After a short while the school became a unit of Bethany Society.

The school functioned in the old laundry rooms of St. Edmund's School for five years. Eventually the same plot of land was kindly donated to the Bethany Society by the Christian Brothers of St. Edmund's Shillong. In 2002 the school moved into its permanent building supported by the Ayudamas, Government of Spain.

The motto of Bethany Society 'Earth and Humans Fully Alive' whispers into the ears of Jyoti Sroat School inspiring it to opportune children and young people and its staff into a 'Life with Dignity', the motto of the school.

Our Vision:

All children and young people especially those with special educational needs and belonging to other vulnerable groups, in and around Meghalaya are empowered in an inclusive barrier free, rights based environment, through equality individualized, educational and rehabilitative programmes, to develop into wholesome individuals living independent and contributive lives with dignity.

What we are:

In 2006, the concept of inclusive education was introduced into the various school's programmes, thus the mission now widens to cover all children including the disabled, disadvantage, marginalized and those coming from difficult circumstances.

Jyoti Sroat School (JSS) is a residential cum day school. Children with visual, hearing and locomotor disabilities from the rural areas of Meghalaya and from adjoining states reside in two hostels run by Bethany Society. Day scholars avail of the school bus service belonging to the latter.

The school received opening permission for Cl X from the Department of Education, Govt. of Meghalaya in 2009. It benefits from the SSA (IED Unit) for the lower and upper primary sections.

The school is seeking formal recognition by the Department of Education and inclusion of all enrolled children under the SSA Scheme.

Mission:

1. To offer academic programmes as per MBOSE requirements with special adaptations for children with special needs.
2. Training in orientation and mobility, daily living skills for those with impairments for independent living.
3. To provide training opportunities in pre-vocational skills and basic education for children with potentials for the same and inadequate abilities for academics.

4. To be a Resource Centre for people with special needs arising out of impairments or conditions.
5. To be a study centre for training of teachers in special education for the visually impaired.

We strive to achieve our vision through:

- appropriate scholastic programmes
- training for independent living
- opportunities for children capable of other than the prescribed scholastic programmes
- training of teachers for promoting inclusive education
- varied and inclusive non-scholastic activities

Management:

A Managing Committee formed under Education Department guidelines sees to the management of the school through a Headmistress who is visually impaired.

For immediate advice the Head consults with the Executive Director of Bethany Society. The nominated members are well-known personalities in the field of education and social service in Shillong.

1. Mr. G.G. Pariat - President – Retired Inspector of Schools, East Khasi Hills District.
2. Ms. B.G. Dkhar - Secretary – Headmistress JSS
3. Mrs. T. Nongkynrih - Joint Secretary – Teaching Staff
4. Mr. C. Noronha - Donor's Representative – Director, Bethany Society
5. Bro. S. Britto - Nominated Member, Representative Christian Brothers
6. Mrs. A. Rangad - Nominated Member
7. Mr. N. Bhattacharjee - Nominated Member, President of Meghalaya Cricket Association
8. Mr. P.L. Diengdoh - Nominated Member – Principal L.P. Higher Sec School, Member of MBOSE
9. Mr. S. Pradhan -Teacher Representative, JSS
10. Mrs. F.F. Lyngdoh - Teacher Representative, JSS
11. Mrs. M. Kharsyntiew - Guardian's/Parent's Representative
12. Ms. M. Makri - Guardian's/Parent's Representative

Sources of funding:

1. The Bethany Society:

- i) continues to bear the salaries of 80 % of the staff.
- ii) supplements short fall of provision of hot midday meals on a daily basis.
- iii) bears short fall from JSS to school bus services.
- iv) maintenance of school building and compound.

2. CBM:

The school benefits greatly from supply of furniture, teaching learning materials, uniforms and school accessories, braille paper for printing and software, training cost for staff members and above all contributes 25% of salary for some staff members.

3. Webel: For project Computerised Braille transcription system at the Blind Schools throughout the country.

4. SSA provides:

- i) remuneration forming part of salaries for 6 teachers (2 L.P & 4 U.P).
- ii) maintenance and teachers grants, midday meal for 96 children.

5. Sponsorships & Donations:

Individuals/Groups from Shillong, India and sometimes abroad on a one time or long term basis.

6. Contribution from parents and guardians:

Donations and contribution from parents according to their individual capacity.

7. Scholarships: From Atma Nirbar Ek Challenge

8. Financial responsibilities of JSS:

1. Salary or honorarium for 20 % of staff members including substitute teachers.
2. Contribution of Employers Share EPF for all staff members. The contribution of one month salary's amount to teachers' welfare fund of Bethany Society for gratuity and earned leave encashment to be credited once a year.
3. Maintenance & Upgrading of all computer and electronic equipments
4. Supplementing transportation cost of day scholars.

The above are in addition to the every day cost of maintaining the school building, furnishing and everyday running the school.

5. Production of Braille text books for visually impaired college students. Till date these students are not charged for the good amount of books produced for them in the school. We have been able to survive so far because of support received from funding sources.

The Managing Committee of the School agrees that the culture of paying amongst students by the family members or guardians too should be encouraged and practiced.

Fund raising and income generation:

They are part and parcel activities of the school, crucial and vital for the up keep and running of the ever increasing number of programmes.

Collaborations with the NIVH and other agencies contribute considerably to the income generation programmes we have in terms of the printing press, sales counter, copy cat (xeroxing) and the Jyoti Sroat Music School.

The Pupils:

Class wise Distribution:

Class	Male	Female	With SEN	Total	Mid Term Dropouts
Pre School	7	5	7	12	
KG I	5	4	3	09	
KG II	10	5	5	15	
CI I	6	7	6	13	
CI II	11	6	9	17	
CI III	9	4	9	13	
CI IV	11	5	9	16	
CI V	8	2	3	10	
CI VI	6	7	9	13	

CI VII	9	7	8	16	
CI VIII	6	5	7	11	
CI IX	4	6	6	10	
CI X	4	2	3	06	
DeafBlind Unit	1	-	1	01	
Special Unit	3	2	2	05	
Pre-Vocational Unit	1	5	5	06	
Total	101	72	92	173	

The enrolment for 2010 ended with 173. Few children, advance in years were admitted for the sake of giving them an opportunity. Their behavioural problems were manifested over the months and were requested to seek admission elsewhere for protecting the other children in the school.

Within its abilities the school tries to accommodate children from the streets, slums, school drop-outs and children from rural areas desiring better educational facilities. Academic programmes for them are based on their abilities and educational background.

The school feels privileged that it can provide opportunities for these children to start or continue with schooling, initially in a sheltered environment. They are put in the general classrooms when they have acquired basic social and discipline skills.

Some pupils in the upper primary level are being prepared for alternative courses after completing class VIII. They follow Individualized Education Programmes. This is because of individual limitations or advance in chronological age.

MBOSE Examinations – 2010 saw two students successfully completing their SSLC Examinations through MBOSE. It is a relief that the above esteemed Board has consented that emunesis for SSLC and HSSLC Examinations should be those reading in classes IX and XI passed respectively.

Staff:

This year’s strength of staff touched 24 teaching and 6 non teaching. Some of the teaching staff are also involved in the various project activities of the school.

One teacher, partly sponsored by Bethany Society is undergoing B.Ed Special Education at the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy, Kolkata. She will return for duty in mid 2011.

As far as possible staff members are encouraged and requested to attend workshops and lectures relevant to the school’s needs.

A Teacher Empowerment Programme: A teacher empowerment programme was conducted by Sr. Cathy Muraham, South Africa on 18th November 2010 at Lumpondeng across the Umiam lake.

Various staff member attended National workshops, conferences/trainings conducted in renowned Institutes in the country.

Parents:

This group of parents does not belong to a single class or kind. Parents of children with SEN in the urban areas belong to all classes; parents of urban day scholars are a group of extremely poor single

mothers and educated and sometimes very irresponsible; the parents of Hostel children belong to the rural low income groups.

In spite of the above, the school tries to bring about a certain kind of oneness amongst all when it comes to times for decision making. Parents and guardians, going through their own personal troubles are happy with the services and obliged to follow suggestions and advice regarding their own child's programme. Most of them if possible give time; take part in school activities especially in fund raising events.

The most difficult ones are those who cannot accept the inability in their own children, they expect too much from them or from the school. In such cases, we do all we can to help them even with staff members spending extra time on them.

Programmes & Activities:

- MBOSE academic courses
- Deaf Blind & Multiple Disabilities
- Support Classes
- Pre-vocational & Functional Education
- Computer Education – Specialised for the Visually Impaired and General
- Training for Independent Living
- Counselling
- Co-curricular Activities
- Fund Raising & Income Generation

Apart from scholastic programmes the following are provided for the students:

1. The co-curricular activities of the school have been selected to include needs and abilities of the visually impaired. Activities in speech making – because of them nearly all our students have blossom into excellent speakers.
2. Music and Singing . . . - Music and Singing are both of recreational as well as therapeutic values. Any child with potentials for the above are given extra opportunities, even preparing them for music and singing as professionals.
3. Sports and Games:
 - Cricket for the blind and general cricket
 - Marchpass and PT
 - Modified Indoor Games
 - Scouts and Guides – The school has plans of incorporating these activities in the ensuing academic year.
4. Special Activities & Achievements:

Orientation to Braille: – In collaboration with the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), Jyoti Sroat School conducted a one week programme on 22nd- 27th March 2010 and on 18th - 23rd October 2010 on Orientation to Braille course also attended by SSA Co-ordinators, Resource Teachers, Programme Coordinators etc

Activity week (22nd - 26th March 2010) - It included inclusive indoor and outdoor co-curricular activities.

Parents' Day Celebration: – Parents' Day Celebration was held on 03rd December 2010 coinciding with World Disability Day.

All India Flag Day for the Blind: - visit our website

MBOSE SSLC 2010 - Two students successfully completed MBOSE SSLC Examinations.

Provisional Recognition – The School was granted provisional recognition by MBOSE with effect from August 2010. As such from 2011 onwards students appear for SSLC Examinations as regular candidates.

Jyoti Sroat School as a Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired.

In spite of its inclusive nature, the school continues to be a Resource Centre for needs and matters related to visual impairment.

1. Teacher Training Programmes – The school is a study centre for RCI recognized NEHU teacher training programmes in special education for the visually impaired. Faculty members consist of trained school staff and other resource persons.
2. Production of Braille text/materials – For some years the Braille Printing Unit was sponsored by friends from abroad. Continuing with the same and further heightened by collaboration with the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), the school produces Braille text books for use of its own students, visually impaired students in higher/alternative studies and on demand by non Governmental or Governmental agencies including the SSA.

It is still the only facility available in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

3. Extension Sales Counter for aids and appliances for visually impaired persons (NIVH) - Various items of such special equipments at highly subsidised rate are available to any person or group in need.
4. Training in orientation and mobility, braille skills - It is open to persons in need of mobility skills or those who desire to learn sighted guide techniques to help the visually impaired.

Any person from the public can avail of braille, mobility, mathematical devices and other related skills for the blind for self enhancement or need.

Jyoti Sroat School is instrumental in sensitizing agencies of Education Department/MBOSE regarding requirements of children with special educational needs in matter of syllabus, examinations etc.

Opportunities:

1. The provisions below are made to ensure that every child's need or needs are met in order to see development in all aspects of his being which contribute a lot to his development and progress as a student and as a person.
 - i) Reduced expectations in terms of parent contribution for children with SEN and the very poor day scholars.

- ii) Reduced School Bus charges
- iii) Book Bank - Print text, aid books and other TLM
- iv) Uniform - The school has its own uniform. It is available at the school on payment except for shoes.
- v) Alternative courses
- vi) Free Coaching Classes
- vii) Medical/Ophthalmic/Psychiatric care
- viii) Assessments, Procurement of Disability certificates
- ix) Through Bethany Society and the school's projects all deserving children receive clothes, school bags, raincoats, umbrellas if they are available.
- x) Computer Education
- xi) Services of the School Counsellor
- xii) Participation in general competitions where a few students won prizes.

2. College students on placement: The school had a limited number of placements for college students and visitors this year. The placements were limited for easier management.

From International Institute for Social Entrepreneur (IISE), Kerela, two blind students – Simon and David worked for Jyoti Sroat School and Bethany Society.

In gratitude:

On behalf of the school, deep felt gratitude goes out to the following:

- Mr. Carmo Noronha - Executive Director and Board Members, Bethany Society
- Christoffel Blinden Mission, J. Bensheim
- J.J O'Dwyer and Abbey India, Ireland
- Christian & Delia Clages, Germany
- Robert Jacques
- John (Netherlands)
- Sr. Cathy Murugan, South Africa
- Webel Media & Electronics
- Mr. G.G. Pariat - Chairman and Members, Managing Committee
- Mr. P.L. Diengdoh - Principal, Laitumkhras Presbyterian Secondary School.
- Bro. Miranda - Principal St. Edmund's College.
- Principal & Vice Principal - St. Edmund's School
- Mrs. T. Lyngdoh - Inspector of Schools, East Khasi Hills
- Mr. B. Lamare - Director, MBOSE
- Department of Education including the SSA
- Officials Department of Social Welfare
- Art & Culture Department
- Sense International
- Mrs. A. Mohit - Director NIVH
- Mr. S. Patnayak - Ramakrishna Mission BBA, Narendrapur
- Mr. Kaushik Das - Atma Nirbar Ek Challenge
- 69 BN CRPF
- Print & Electronic Media
- Gopinath Enterprise
- Volunteers from different Colleges and Communities
- Local Sponsors
- Other sponsors, well wishers and friends

- Schools and Colleges, public who participated in the All India Flag Day for the Blind, 14th September 2010.
- Staff, Bethany Society office, Bus Drivers, Attendants and Divine Flame Hostel

Over and above the achievements mentioned earlier, it is inspiring when thinking about successful interventions amongst some children and thinking about the joy and hope seen again in the faces of their parents and loved ones. These children with special needs were misjudged, even ill treated in other schools of Shillong and labelled as almost hopeless cases. Yet only after a year or so in the school they finished 2010 happier and more confident boys and girls.

Their individual success stories will be available in the School's website.

At the end of the fourth year of inclusion, we are all the more assured and adamant that inclusive education is the best approached for meeting educational and social needs of ALL CHILDREN, ofcourse when administered with utmost care and compassion. As such JSS is exemplary in terms of programmes, facilities and above all professionalism and dedication amongst all its staff members.

This led to the conferment of the Padmashree Award for Education on the Headmistress nominated by the Meghalaya State Department of Education.

JSS in 2011

For further addition, improvement and empowerment purposes, we foresee

1. A self evolved syllabi to bridge school dropouts to their suitable academic classes
2. Providing after-school coaching classes for day scholars for whom supervised home studies is impossible
3. Staff-turn over of trained teachers reached the highest this year. It requires recruitment of fresh teachers.
4. Fresh training of teachers and other professionals follows the above
5. Probing all possible avenues to make JSS financially independent for ensuring present and improve remuneration for staff members. This is crucial for retaining trained staff members
6. Empowering parents and guardians for positive parenting – it will be the initiative of the school counsellor along with college students of Social Work
7. Possibility of participation in inter school football tournaments requiring a school football team under professional coaching and mentoring

Again and yet again JSS strives and will strive within its means to provide opportunities for all to perfect each either academically, professionally and most of all to bring out the best in the 'person'.

We look forward to another eventful year with the help and support of each and every one who has the cause of a child in their best interest.

Please visit the school's website for more detailed stories about us.