

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

BACKGROUND

Asha Trust, is a Social Service and Community Based Organization based in Thiruvallur District of the State of Tamil Nadu, established in the year 2006 to serve the poor and marginalized communities and vulnerable children for overall development and empowerment through delivering services and care activities.

This district has agriculture and agricultural allied activities as main occupation but over the years, surge in the concentration of industrial clusters and other private manufacturing industrial activities such as brick kilns- construction source activities have transformed Tiruvallur into an industrial hub. This this has led to increasing hazardous environment and chemicals usage in manufacturing process. Naturally, this exposure to hazardous environment and occupations has negative implications on health of communities and children, specifically, the differently abled child population sizably increased as a fall out and this has been a major concern currently.

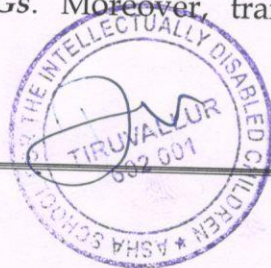
In this situation, Asha Trust is working with a passion and commitment to mitigate the negative impacts on disabled children and works to fulfil the real needs of communities inclusive of disabled children in the areas of *health, education and rural development* with proactive efforts and initiatives of Chief Functionary and Founder of this Community Based Organization. Asha Trust has become an Institutional Care facility to provide access to health care and education for the needy and disadvantaged children and awareness education for their parents particularly mothers who are caring children. Poverty alleviation and community development are also focus of the organization so that poor could be empowered socially and economically.

Target Communities and Stakeholders

Asha Trust's core activities are primarily targeted towards *providing essential basic services and creating an access to entitlements- welfare services and schemes for children*, youth, women, agrarian families- small and marginal farmers, the old aged and the differently abled categories belonging to rural, socially marginalized communities such as SC and ST and other needy people across its operational area.

Prioritized Sectors and Thematic Interventions

Asha Trust prioritized thematic focus on *special and social education, health and sanitation, skill development, promotion of women Self Help Groups, micro enterprises and creating linkages to financial institutions for SHGs*. Moreover, transfer of



appropriate native and traditional technologies and skills to the agrarian communities on watershed development and livelihood promotion was also focused. Apart from that, adult literacy, rural and urban poor infrastructure development, welfare of the aged and differently abled were also equally focused.

VISION AND MISSION OF ASHA TRUST

Asha Trust envisions "*an equitable and just society in which all vulnerable, deplorable and disadvantaged communities shall access to quality health care, education and food security -basic services and productive resources without any discrimination*"

Mission is to work towards realizing the development through peoples' collective initiatives:

- ❖ Empowering most vulnerable and disadvantaged women, children, the elderly, the sick, the disabled and other vulnerable sections
- ❖ Addressing all forms of discrimination against women and children including abuse against children.
- ❖ Special protection for - the women, children, the elderly, the sick, the challenged, the vulnerable sections

Towards achieving this mission, Asha Trust has solicited partnership with the community and like-minded organizations, Collaboration with the Government institutions and the private sector and development partners at local, state and national levels. The aims of the organization are:

- ❖ Empowering vulnerable and marginalized community to assert their basic services and entitlements
- ❖ Creating access to education and health for children in need
- ❖ Protection of child, women and free from violence and abuse
- ❖ Enabling their fullest participation in development
- ❖ Fullest and equitable opportunities for
 - Protection of child rights and education
 - Empowerment of women through socio-economic activities
 - Capacity building
 - Human resource development
 - Strengthening relationships among family, neighborhood, community and society at large

ASHA TRUST - OBJECTIVES

- **Formation of People's Association** for seeking basic services and entitlements
- **Capacity building to empower people, particularly women, children and the vulnerable sections** to realize their rights and duties



- **Collaboration with individuals, organizations and institutions** at the local, regional, national and international levels to promote human development and human security with equity
- **Economic empowerment of poor families** through collective interventions and initiatives
- **Building linkages between the government and the communities** at all levels to promote community holistic development.
- **Promoting the value of sustainable development**, environment friendly living conditions by preservation of natural resources and safe environment and promote climate resilient agriculture with organic farming.
- Working for the protection of the rights-based on **human dignity, freedom and security of people with disabilities, the HIV / AIDS affected, the destitute and the deserted**

IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES:

SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN A UNIT OF ASHA TRUST

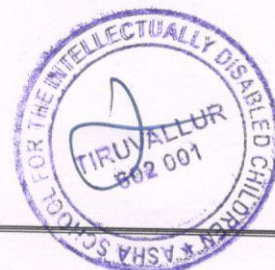
This Special School is providing non-residential care with the objective of bringing about varying degrees of improvement in the lives of persons with disability- *Personal, Social, Academic, Recreational, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Therapy*. We conduct PRE- PRIMAY, PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND PRE-VOCATIONAL CLASSES for 4- 14 years old children following FACP curriculum.

These may range from acquiring skills as basic as activities of daily living to their integration into regular institutions of learning and society in general. With reference to the- children with Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy/Autism Spectrum Disorder/Multiple Disabilities category, **the main objectives of this school are:**

- i. To undertake a proper assessment and diagnosis of each child.
- ii. To identify the psychological and therapy needs of the child.
- iii. To manage behavioral problems and to impart special skills, self-care skills, and cater to the therapy needs of children with Intellectual Disability/Cerebral Palsy/Autism Spectrum Disorder/Multiple Disabilities etc.
- iv. To manage the educational and vocational needs.
- v. To give special inputs for the improvement of the communication/language/motor/social/cognitive/adaptive skills of the children with ID/CP/ASD/MD etc.

STAFF: -

At present we have strength of Six staff fully trained special educators who have experience and expertise in teaching and three-support non - teaching staff.



Regular Classes

Children attend regular classes with spontaneous joy and interest, motivation to learn in the smart-class room atmosphere, learn in a space where they could react, interact and respond. Thus, they are trying to address learning loss, activity workbooks cum TLM- Teaching Learning Materials and play way methods in special education with physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy.

Vocational Training

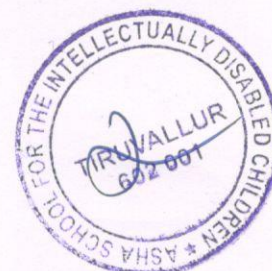
Vocational Training has been gaining the important place in the field of special education. The ultimate aim of the Asha School for the Intellectually Disabled Children is to rehabilitate the students and enable them as a useful member of the society with specific vocational skills which in turn practically benefits these children. Theoretical and practical tips on vocational stream was given on nursery garden and its importance as they were spending considerable time back home after school.

Training, Refresher Courses and Meeting: -

Staff meetings were conducted monthly to review the activities, academic progress along with personal development and to take reformations in conducting the school classes. Parents meetings were held once in three months to inform about the student's progress and also inform the parents to support their children at home to improve the learning curve of children.

The training as well as regular meetings were useful for teachers to enrich their skills and motivate them to teach intellectually disabled children with much care and concern. Parents have expressed their satisfaction after noticing marked changes and these meetings have provided a space for them to share their issues.

Direct events were organized by the District Differently Abled Welfare Office-DDAWO for PwIDs children and they performed games, drawing, cooking, dancing, singing and different categories for different kinds of disabilities. Asha School for the Mentally Retarded Children organized events, sports and participated in the programs that organized by the Collectorate and participated in the celebration and observation of World Disabled Day in the district.



Asha Vikaas Day Care Centre- Institutional Care for children in Need – Supported by National Trust

The nature of the children with PwIDs enrolled in the Asha Vikaas Day Care Centre was covering the following disabilities.

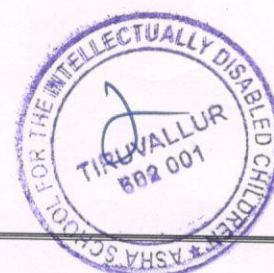
1. *Autism,*
2. *Cerebral Palsy,*
3. *Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities* who completed age of 10 years or more.

During the period under reporting, in the Asha Vikaas Centre, the total strength covered was 31 PwDs- 15 girls, 16 boys attended the centre from April 2023- August 2023 and in Sep 2023, one boy and one girl was additionally enrolled, thus total has been increased to 33 – 16 girls and 17 boys. These 33 children were benefited through inclusive learning and skill acquisition. Among them, the National Trust funded 13 girls and 14 boys, total 27 of PwIDs

The children with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities who enrolled were completed the age of 10 years or more. Various activities such as motivating them to do self-activities and so some basic minimum activities thereby they could manage themselves when nobody is there around them to take care. Activities such as Occupation therapy, Physiological and Psychological development activities, Yoga, Exercise and related activities are integrated continuously with the help of trained and experienced professional Educators and social workers.

The activities were classified under four broader categories

1. **Special Education** – After careful basic assessment of personal skills, learning abilities and capacities, behavior pattern, special education is being offered to suit their physical and mental age and absorbing status by the Special educators and appropriate level teaching is offered with teaching aid. Special educators conducted class activities to the children, enabled them to learn Special Education, Speech therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy using TLM- teaching learning materials and children learned with much more enthusiasm and interest. Pre-vocational activities based on potential economic income generating activities done for the children and this process would enrich the skill sets of children.



2. **Care giving activities-** All children were enjoying their class activities, educational group activities, peer interaction and direct response to teachers, this activity was more focused on personal care and self-care. Self-Care activities imparted to the mentally retarded children -Combing, vessel washing, mask wearing and folding sleeping mates.
3. **Therapy activities-** Physical activities such as stretching hand, leg, movement of body, general body strengthening to enable them to keep them active physically and activities for speech and occupational therapy coordination activities were imparted by therapists.

Development of PwDs

- 95% of PwDs shown qualitative improvements and substantial marked developments in terms of taking self-care activities individually- cleaning their body, grooming, combing, wearing dresses by themselves etc., engage in physical health care, their hygienic consciousness has substantially improved- make their home surrounding environment clean, garbage dumping in bins and washing their hands before and after use of bathroom. The staff of Asha Vikaas Day Care Centre based on the need as well as situation, counselled the parents and motivating with an awareness education, care giving tips and simple therapy techniques with available tools and activity-based pedagogy was used extensively. Continued to peruse the TLM- Teaching and Learning materials that were distributed to children which consists of- booklets, measuring kit, drawing, weighing machine, calculation using simple methods, mobile gadget to improve the basic communication, wrist watch to identify time and time management, language ladders, stories, fine motor activities- beads etc. These learning materials were used indeed as a basic teaching tool for these children as they easily assimilate and internalize as they are learning by doing and for the teachers also, it was easy to impart basic learning using these well-researched and tested tools that developed by National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (DIVYANGJAN). This TLM is indeed highly attractive for children and prompting their cognitive ability, sensitivity and motor activity. They improved in many aspects and desirable outcomes have been created for PwDs as intended.

Gainful Employment of PwD

- Mat weaving sessions were conducted regularly for children who are interested to learn and based on assessment of their cognitive ability and intuitiveness to learn skills, this session was offered. Making envelop cover, phenyl detergent liquid making, preparing children to write 10th examinations and special examinations.



Achievements

- our children M. Saranya and P. Nithish, passed the 10th examination and C. Praveen has cleared plus one examination, this has motivated other children to prepare for the examination. Now Praveen is preparing for +2 examinations and Harini, Dharshini and Tarkesh are preparing for 10th examinations.
- World Autism Day was observed on April 2, 2023 and on June 21 International Yoga Day, on June 24, 2023 Chief Minister's Certificate and Prize Awarding ceremony in Government Law College, on August 15th India's Independence Day and on 7th September 2023 World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Sep 7, 2023 World Physiotherapy Day were observed in Day Care Centre with much enthusiasm, information sharing about the day and to promote social inclusion.
- A dental camp was organized in the centre in collaboration with the Priyadarshini Dental College on September 15th, 2023 and Vinayagar Chaturthi was celebrated on the same day with much participation of children.
- Praveen is preparing for +2 examinations and Harini, Dharshini and Tarkesh are preparing for 10th examinations slated in April. It was a great motivation for other children and parents of the centre as it is a significant milestone in the history of the centre supported by the National Trust.
- Asha Day Care Centre observed World Cerebral Palsy Day and Awareness Creation on October 6th, celebrating Durga Puja on 20th October 2023, 10th November for Diwali and 23rd December for Christmas, Harvest Festival on 12th January 2024, 26th January 2024 Republic Day, World Disability Day on 28th February, World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March 2024.
- A dental camp was organized in the centre on 2nd March 2024 with the support from Dr Chandru of K.M. Medical Care and in which camp, it was diagnosed the dental cavity for 11 children and further referral services was also offered by him
- PWIDs have gained simple skills and gained interest to accomplish personal chores at their homes- self-care to maintain body hygiene, washing of home utensils, folding of bedding mates and simple cooking and ability gained to take care of surrounding at home and this acumen has increased. Occupational /speech therapy, interactive game-based activity was followed with a guidance and facilitation for holistic personality development. As a result of constant care, beneficiary children shown positive growth and visible changes.
- The beneficiary PwIDs of Asha Vikaas Day Care Centre approached Special Educators - Teachers, Care Givers, Therapists with much ease and directly seeking guidance from them on their day to day needs and special requirements, they sought support whenever they require any clarifications, sought more information. Parents were approaching to apply and access welfare schemes and benefits, how to fulfil conditionalities attached to those schemes, filing applications and follow up till availing the benefits. Staff and Director provided process-oriented information and helped them



to apply and access welfare schemes for PWDs. This was really useful for the beneficiaries.

- Training activities on certain special skills- door mat weaving for selected children based on skill-assessment internally, paper envelop preparation, other employment opportunities were also continued.

- Asha School for the Mentally Retarded Children (A unit of ASHA Trust) has coordinated with District Officers of PwD and District Administration for accessing UD ID card for 100 % coverage and totally 33 children have obtained introduced UD ID card.

- Health insurance was applied and accessed cards for all our centre PWIDs. All children are using these cards now.

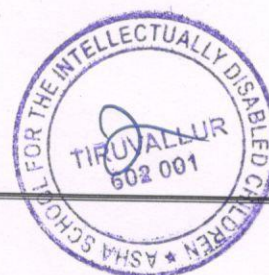
The Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PwIDs) have been identified from the rural, isolated, and difficult terrain to reach where no one from vulnerable communities have not accessed these services hitherto as there was no opportunity and affordability for them to access and these communities were reached out with the help of the National Trust and this was great help for them otherwise they would not have accessed these facilities and forced to toil in their own problems without remedy.

Observation of Days of Importance

Asha Day Care Centre observed many days of importance to create awareness, to share information and motivate children and parents on that particular theme and subject.

World Autism Day was observed on April 2, 2023 with cake cutting by children and awareness creation among parents were conducted and colorful lighting with yellow and blue color attractive illuminated lights was organized in the whole building. On June 21 International Yoga Day, on June 24, 2023 Chief Minister's Certificate and Prize Awarding ceremony in Government Law College, on August 15th India's Independence Day and on 7th September 2023 World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Sep 8, 2023 World Physiotherapy Day were observed in Day Care Centre with much enthusiasm, information sharing about the day and to promote social inclusion.

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NATIONAL TRUST, LOCAL LEVEL COMMITTEE NGO MEMBER, TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT

In 2023-2024, 63 legal guardianship certificates were issued from April 2023 to March 2024 successfully by identifying Persons with Intellectual Disability, establishing rapport with children and parents, and persuading parents and guardians to apply for certificates and based on these follow up activities, many children and parents accessed legal guardianship. This was indeed really helpful for these children who were in need. Thus, 63 legal guardianship certificates were issued. For opening bank accounts, for legal registration of any documents for business or any other activity, for obtaining monthly maintenance grant, these certificates were very useful.

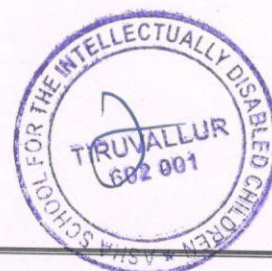
So far in Tiruvallur district, total 595 legal guardianship certificates have been issued to protect PwD.

We have provided Nirmaya Health Insurance ID Card for a whopping 139 new beneficiaries enrolled in this year 2023-24 and 195 have renewal from the National Trust for these four Disabilities. They have used these special insurance coverages for medical expenses for all four types of disabilities and was useful remedy as it directly transferred to the parents.

Asha Trust is a registered entity under the National Trust Act. We are a local Level Committee NGO Member also. We deal with the welfare of persons with Autism, cerebral palsy, Mental Retardation and multiple disabilities. In Thiruvallur district we are conducting social awareness Programme and parent's meeting to disseminate information about the available welfare schemes and programmes of the National Trust Act so that parents could be able to use and benefit out of it. Parents are also aware of basic services and other entitlements of their children and also welfare schemes for parents. After conducting all these programmes, we appoint Legal Guardianship to the persons of PwDs of all these categories.

Autism Centre

From 2023-2024, Autism Centre has been opened by the organization to provide therapy- occupational, speech and physiotherapy activities were conducted for these children. 9 children benefited from this centre and it is a leap forward in providing therapy services.

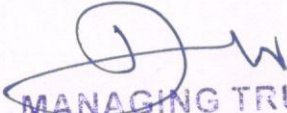


CONCLUSION

It was a great year to achieve school-based activities in reaching out to 29 needy children in Asha School from pre-primary to secondary, 31 in Asha Vikas Care Centre and able to gain legal guardianship for 63 children, so far in Tiruvallur district, in total 595 legal guardianship certificates have been issued to protect PwID through MIS Portal. In terms of insurance cover is concerned, we have provided Nirmaya Health Insurance ID Card for a whopping 139 new beneficiaries enrolled in this year 2023-24 and 195 have renewal from the National Trust for these four Disabilities and as this is special insurance scheme, parents were able to directly benefit. World Down Syndrome Day was observed on March 21, 2024 with cake cutting by children, as centre illuminated with Yellow and blue lights, World Autism Day the entire centre premises illuminated with blue color and World Physiotherapy Day was with green color thus festive and celebration moments have been created.

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MANAGING TRUSTEE
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