

San Jose Puram Children's Village for Rehabilitation

Nestled amidst 30 villages just fifty five kms off Delhi- the capital of India, is the peaceful San Jose Puram Children's village for Rehabilitation. Its sprawling 25 acres form a haven that children with disabilities from the surrounding villages enjoy as they prepare to step into the outside world as complete individuals.

The mood is one of contentment and normalcy as children with disabilities play and learn with other children, oblivious (as they should be) to their impairments.

The learning is a two way process as other children learn to accept children with disabilities as their equals and learn to associate with them in equal terms. For the children with disabilities, it is a much needed opportunity to understand that disabilities do not make them different- a very important lesson since hitherto, they were seen more as burdens than a happy addition to their families.

In a country with an estimated population of the disabled at over 38 million San Jose Puram, set in Chandpur, Faridabad district of Haryana in North India is one of the pioneer enterprises in the field of rehabilitation of the children and adults with disabilities in a rural set up. It is the realisation of a long cherished dream of Rev. Dr Sebastian Vadakumpadan, founder president of the St Josephs Service Society; a New Delhi based charitable society operational from 1993, funded by Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO).

San Jose Puram which is fashioned to be an inclusive school opened its doors in 1996. This would not have happened, if not for an international seminar Fr Vadakumpadan attended just before setting up a special school for children with disabilities. It was at the seminar that Fr Rev Vadakumpadan decided against the original intention of setting up the special school. He was now convinced of the usefulness of an inclusive school.

At the school, the differently abled children attend regular school with other children. Teachers with special training, work together with the class teachers. Though it is perceived as an arduous task the results encourage the school to take up the challenge. The children with special needs learn not only from the teachers but also from other children. The other children also get used to reality and learn to love, respect and help children with disabilities. With a few architectural changes in the toilets, ramps instead of staircases make the building accessible to ALL.

There are over 200 children attending the nursery and kindergarten classes currently. Of these 2 children have disabilities, 1 has hearing impairment and the other is a suspected case of delayed speech. 7 of these 200 children are from the poor homes and are being provided concessions. The table below shows the types of disability and their number

Class/Std	Number of children			Percentage of children with disability
	Disability	Non- Disability	Total	
I A	7	32	39	18
I B	2	35	37	5
II A	3	34	37	8
II B	6	33	39	15
III	4	40	44	9
IV	5	36	41	12
V	6	20	26	23
VI	1	18	19	5
Total	34	248	282	12

Apart from an inclusive institute, San Jose Puram has five children's homes that provide integrated hostelling for the disabled and destitute girls. The five residential homes are

- 1.Rani Sadan - Home for the Physically challenged
- 2.Jeevandhara - Home for the Speech & Hearing impaired
- 3.Vinayalaya - Home for the Mentally Challenged
- 4.St. Mary's Children's home - Home for the visually challenged
- 5.S H Children's Home - Home for the destitute

San Jose Puram also has an integrated health care centre, human resources development centre and a vocational training institute.

The Infant Jesus inclusive school of San Jose Puram has 481 students. Complete with a lab and a library, it has five classroom and 30 teachers of whom four are special educators. The students come from over 30 villages in the district.

For the vision impaired, ten computers have been provided and special software has been acquired for the mentally challenged and vision impaired students. Other facilities include Braille books, geometry kits. In addition to this is the San Joe Puram Extension-a vocational rehabilitation center, spread over an area of ten acres of land adjacent to San Joe Puram children's village. It provides training in horticulture,

carpentry, tailoring, fishery and poultry for mainly disabled youth from the neighbouring 30 villages.

Health care needs are taken care of by the Bethzatha Hospital & Mobile Clinic. Apart from basic health needs, the hospital is being developed as a holistic health care centre for the disabled persons by adding departments of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Yoga, Eye care, Speech Therapy, and Child Counselling.

Adults with disabilities are also trained at San Jose Puram in vocational skills like horticulture, carpentry and rural crafts turning them into fruitful bread winners of their families.

The school has numerous visitors, ranging from students to social workers who not only get trained at the centre but also study the impact of the Society's work on the target group.

All the known persons with disability in the area										
Type of Impairment	Children				Young Adults		Adults		Total	
	Age 0-5 yrs		Age 6-15 yrs		Age 16-35 yrs		Age 36+ yrs			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Visual	1	1	3	4	7	5	12	3	23	13
Hearing & Speech	2	0	12	15	11	5	10	3	35	23
Physical	6	4	80	46	103	37	30	17	219	104
Leprosy									0	0
Convulsions									0	0
Mental Illness									0	0
Intellectual			5	10	6	1			11	11
Multiple Others			1	3	3	1	2		6	4
TOTAL	9	15	101	78	130	49	54	23	294	155

Disabled persons directly benefiting from home visits and rehabilitation activities										
Type of Impairment	Children				Young Adults		Adults		Total	
	Age 0-5 yrs		Age 6-15 yrs		Age 16-35 yrs		Age 36+ yrs			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Visual	1	1	3	4	7	5	12	3	23	13
Hearing & Speech	2	0	12	5	11	5	10	3	35	13
Physical	6	4	35	21	45	25	25	14	111	64

Leprosy									0	0
Convulsions									0	0
Mental Illness									0	0
Intellectual			5	10	6	1			11	11
Multiple Others			1	3	3	1	2		6	4
TOTAL	9	5	56	43	72	37	49	20	186	105

Incidentally, the St Joseph Service Society is one of the two centres in India for the Network for Inclusive Education-an information network committed to promoting the participation of marginalized groups all over South Asia in the field of Inclusive Education. This network set up in 2000 has been developed inspired by [EENET](#).

The other operational centre is at AMICI, Bangalore- the Regional Office of [AIFO](#), Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau. The network is supported by the European Union through [AIFO](#).

For more information on the project connect to www.aifoindia.org and follow the enabling inclusion links.

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