

Annual Report on the work of the
Ali S. K. Memorial Society for the Children
for the year 1998-99

1. Foundation: The Ali S.K. Memorial Society for the Children (ASKMSC) was founded on 22 February 1998 and registration under the West Bengal Society Registration Act, 1961 was applied for soon after.

2. Registration: On 6 July 1998 registration was certified by the Registrar of Firms, Societies and Non-Trading Corporations.

3. Objectives: The Ali S. K. Memorial Society for the Children is dedicated to help the street children of Calcutta. It is estimated that some 100,000 children are living on the streets of Calcutta, whether with their families, orphaned or simply abandoned. The majority of them never attend any school and live in extreme poverty. They spend their nights under the open sky and pursue the vocations of ragpicking or street trades like hawking, selling vegetables in the city markets and working as helpers in roadside eating houses and tea stalls. They often do not have access to safe drinking water, are deprived of any health care when ill and suffer from acute malnutrition. Frequent harassment by the police and sexual abuse adds to their plight. With no education, recreation or social acceptance their future as adults is dim. The objectives that ASKMSC seeks to attain to help some of these street children to break this vicious circle, may be summed up as follows:

- Running homes to accommodate orphaned, abandoned and other children in need.
- Offering basic services like education, health care, clothing and daily meals.
- Finding personal sponsors for the children.
- Admitting them in formal schools to put them into the mainstream of child population.
- Providing tuition fees, books, pencils and exercise books throughout the academic year.
- Giving social counselling and life guidance.
- Offering further support for vocational training, higher studies and job guidance when and where required.
- Providing them with facilities and time for recreation.

4. Achievements: Since the registration of the society on 6.7.98 major emphases has been put on finding a suitable place to accommodate street

children or to give shelter to them. After some land had been generously provided to the society it was decided to build a home for street children. Preparations for the construction of this home for street children are now on the way. However at the moment funds are very much limited and the need is felt to find regular donors and sponsors for the project.

5. Finances: Being fairly new the ASKMSC is at the moment mainly dependent on the membership fees of its members and on regular contributions from its friends and well-wishers. Fund raising programmes and campaigns are also planned from time to time in the future.

6. Outlook: The society plans to achieve its objectives in a phased manner where the first step will be the construction of a home for street children on the land provided to the society. Construction once started should be complete within six months. This building is estimated to accommodate about 20 children. Personal sponsorship for the children will be arranged and running costs will be provided by ASKMSC. In a second step another, bigger home is planned on a land to be acquired by the society once more funds come in. A last step will be the construction of a small campus in the countryside for recreation and further accommodations. The proper time frame for phase two and three is mainly dependent on the flow of funds amongst other factors and cannot be estimated at the moment.