

**Annual Report on the work of the**  
**Ali S. K. Memorial Society for the Children**  
**for the year 2000-01**

- 1. Introduction**      The main object of the Ali S. K. Memorial Society for the Children (ASKMSC) is to provide food, shelter and education to orphaned, abandoned and other children in need. In order to achieve this goal the construction of our first home for street children was completed within the year and the first 10 children could move in.
- 2. Activities:**
- (i) General** - Due to lack of funds the construction of our first home for street children progressed very slow in the first half of 2000. The German NGO “Aktion Lebenshilfe fur Indiens Strassenkinder e.V.” offered to help towards the cost of the construction as well as the running costs of the building. In April 2000 the prior permission of the Central Government under Section 6(1A) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976, was sought for. Things changed for the better when the permission to receive foreign contribution from “Aktion Lebenshilfe fur Indiens Strassenkinder e. V.” was granted by the Ministry of Home Affairs in June 2000. In the following months considerable progress could be made with the construction. In the meantime contact was established with the NGO CINI-Asha for co-operation in the field of child welfare. In the month of October the license to run a home for children was applied for with the Directorate of Social Welfare under the West Bengal Women’s and Children’s Institutions (Licensing) Rules, 1958.
- When in November 2000 the construction of our first home for street children was complete CINI-Asha referred the first street children to us. The following 10 children could be accommodated:
- Ajgar Sheikh, 8 years  
Biswajit Sikdar, 6 years  
Chattu Das, 5 years  
Dhaniram Halder, 10 years  
Kutubuddin Sheikh, 5 years  
Pintu Tati, 6 years  
Pradip Das, 5 years  
Raju Mandal, 5 years  
Sudhir Dhopi, 6 years  
Suraj Dhopi, 5 years
- A cook and a teacher were hired and in the following months major emphases was put on getting the children prepared for admission to primary school.

In December the German NGO “Aktion Lebenshilfe für Indiens Strassenkinder e. V.” offered some more funds towards the running costs of the home for street children and another application was filed with the Central Government under Section 6(1A) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 for prior permission. The same was granted in February 2001.

**(ii) Background of our Children** - Our children were all living in and around Sealdah Railway Station. They survived by begging in the station or on the trains. They also ate the food from the garbage of the restaurants in the area or rotten vegetables from the surrounding markets. One of them is an orphan with no relatives known. The others have been mainly abandoned by their families. 8 are from the state of West Bengal and 2 have come from Bihar.

**(iii) Problems faced by us** - The main problem with the children was that they were unruly and undisciplined in the beginning. They fought occasionally and used slang words. Trying to teach them discipline was our first priority. Some of them also had strong problems to concentrate on their studies. If approached wrongly or put under pressure they closed down completely and did not react to any questions anymore. However these problems could be overcome fast and the children improved very well under the careful guidance of the staff.

**(iv) Psychological and Emotional Environment** - The ASKMSC considers it important to provide the children with a stable and healthy psychological environment. This includes a regular routine, a limited number of children in the home and loyal and constant staff. The children show now less aggression and are able to concentrate much better on their studies.

**(v) Education** - It was our major concern to get the children admitted to formal schools. The children learned alphabets and numbers in English and Bengali as well as simple Maths and General Knowledge. It was also important for us to develop their creativity. The children all in all improved very well and within a few months they were able to write Bengali as well as English and do some basic reading and Maths.

**(vi) Sports and other Activities** - Along with education we have arranged for physical exercise and games for the children. In the morning the children go to the local stadium and do some running, long jump or play football and cricket. In the evening they get Karate training by a local voluntary teacher.

**(vii) Leisure** - In their free time the children play with toys, do some painting or simply play games.

**(viii) Meals** – We supply the children regularly with breakfast

after morning sports, lunch and dinner as well as a daily milk and biscuit break at 5 o'clock.

**(ix) Excursions** – On 25<sup>th</sup> of December we went for a picnic with our children. We had lunch out in the green and the children enjoyed football and cricket in the afternoon. In January our children went to the Zoo. They had lots of fun seeing the animals and back home they did a lot of drawings of these animals. In the month of March we went to Waterworld. Even so most of our children could not swim they were so enthusiastically playing in the water all day long that they all fell asleep on the way back home.

**(x) Volunteers** - In our project we get voluntary service from local people and people from abroad. They do not only help in education of the children, but also entertain the children and present them with gifts and toys. They also bring different educational things such as books and cassettes to teach the children.

### **3. Finances:**

The ASKMSC is at the moment mainly dependent on the German NGO "Aktion Lebenshilfe für Indiens Strassenkinder e. V." for funds. It provides personal sponsors for the children and is willing to support us frequently with funds in the future. Contact with another NGO in the UK also has been established and might be very promising in the future. For this purpose the required registration with the Central Government under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 for the acceptance of foreign contribution has to be applied for within the coming year. A substantial part of ASKMSC's funds still comes from the membership fees of its members and from regular contributions from its friends and well-wishers. In addition fund-raising programmes and campaigns are planned again from time to time in the future.

### **4. Outlook:**

We hope to get our children admitted to formal schools within the next session. It is also intended to fill the first home for street children to its maximum capacity within the coming year. It is therefore planned to further increase contacts with other NGOs concerned with street children to seek scope for possible co-operation in this field. If flow of funds will permit it we will also start with the construction of our second home.