

THE CENTRE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

A school for spastic children maintained by
The Spastics Society of India



Spastics have a mind that works but a body that does'nt

A totally integrated educational and therapy programme for spastic children

There are disabled children and there are spastics. The difference is not only that most spastics suffer from multiple handicaps, but that ironically more than 50% of them are of average or above average intelligence. The spastic child is as capable of learning as a normal child, though he often lags behind because of his handicaps. Creating an environment in which this intelligence can flower despite the severe physical disabilities is the challenging task of the Centre for Special Education—the first totally integrated educational and treatment programme set up for spastic children in India, within a special school setting.



A preparation for life

Sponsored in 1973 by the Spastics Society, the Centre for Special Education was opened at Colaba in Bombay with 3 children and as many teachers. Today it bustles with noise and activity as 55 spastic children cope enthusiastically with the rigours of a regular school curriculum that will prepare many of them to appear for the SSC examination held by the Maharashtra Board of Education. Besides the regular school time-table, the children learn music, dances, drama, arts and crafts and swimming. Drama is a favourite with the children and provides a satisfying outlet for their artistic talents and emotional growth. The Centre holds arts & crafts exhibitions and concerts annually—entirely the handiwork of the children. The aim throughout is to inspire confidence by increasing their knowledge and skills in coping independently with a variety of tasks.



Making the most of what they have

Apart from a common syllabus, the Centre for Special Education is as different from regular schools as its pupils are from normal school-going children. Hampered by their individual disabilities, the children set their own pace of learning, and require the constant attention of a large staff of dedicated and specially trained teachers and therapists. Occupational, Speech and Physiotherapy is given to the children according to their needs. This is an integral part of the school curriculum.

Each child is first assessed by the therapists after which the type and frequency of therapy is planned according to the child's needs. Treatment is essential for most children and should start as early as possible. Without therapeutic intervention, there is a great possibility of the child becoming further hampered by his handicaps.



Therapy is also available on an "out-patient" basis for those children who are not yet ready for the school. The Centre also employs some of the latest electronic teaching aids for handicapped children designed to overcome the impediments of incoherent speech and uncoordinated motion characteristic of the majority of spastics. Every effort is made to ensure that the children benefit from the very best care that love and modern scientific knowledge can offer to help them make the most of what they have.

Not least, there is a special emphasis on educating the parents, many of whom belong to the lower income groups of society. The Centre offers personalised counselling designed to help them cope with the unique demands and problems of their handicapped children and provide the right kind of home environment.



Admissions

Pupils must first be assessed by a professional panel attached to the Centre, and later evaluated at the Centre by the staff before a final decision is taken. The children accepted are primarily those suffering from cerebral palsy and who could benefit from the services offered. In a few special cases, children with specific learning difficulties resulting from brain damage will be taken. The Centre admits children from all social classes who are evaluated entirely on their individual abilities. Fees are charged according to the parents' financial constraints. Some pay as little as Rs. 10/- a month.

The Spastics Society

Patron : Shrimati Nargis Dutt

President : Shri Harish Mahindra

Chairman : Shrimati Mithu Chib

The Spastics Society came into being in 1972, to alert the nation to the needs of spastic children in India. The main objective of the Society was to provide both educational and therapeutic facilities under one roof, which would enable the spastic child to develop his full potential and make him as independent as he could possibly become. Within a year of its formation, the Spastics Society opened its first centre in Bombay. A second centre was set up in Calcutta in 1974. A special diploma course to train teachers in the education of physically handicapped children was started in 1977 in Bombay, in collaboration with the Bombay Institute of Education. In 1978, the Society opened its third centre in Delhi. **Today the Spastics Society takes care of over 150 spastic children and their families all over India.**

The Spastics Society has also been very active in creating an awareness of the unique problems of spastic children among the general public, as well as the medical and para-medical professions, educationists and the government. It has sponsored local, national and international conferences where critical areas of neglect have been defined and new programmes initiated.

The Centre in Bombay, already receives a regular grant from the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. An ambitious 5-year Plan envisages more special schools, residential schools, teacher training courses and sheltered workshops to be set up across the country.

All this requires money.

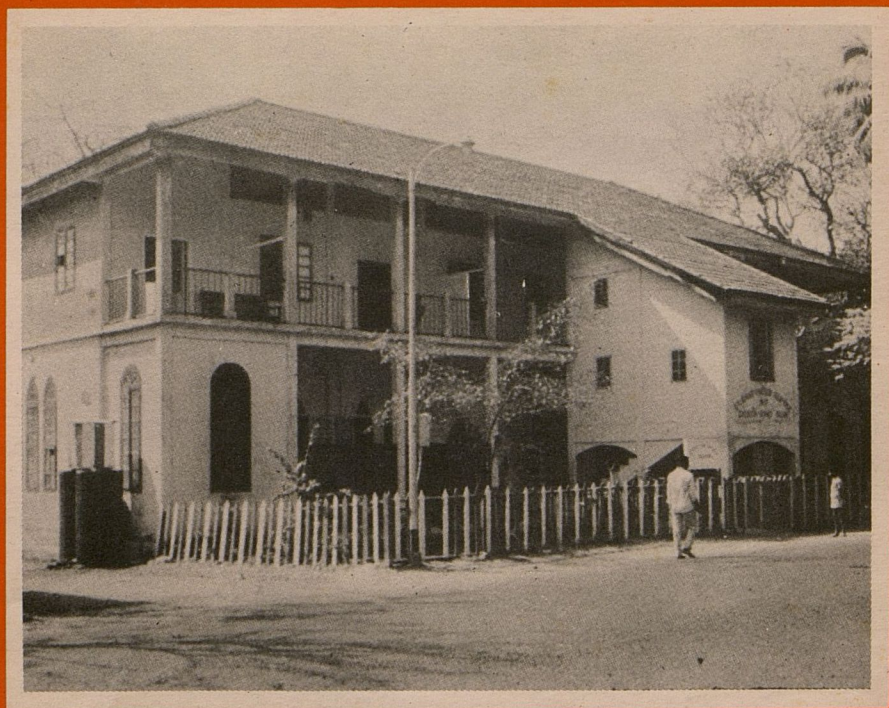
The Spastics Society urgently needs continuing help and support from every available source. There are hundreds and thousands of spastic children and adults silently, hopefully waiting.

They look towards the Society for help. The Society is dedicated to serving their cause and meeting this challenge.

HELP US TO HELP SPASTICS



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