

LEH-LADAKH

Empowering The
Differently Abled





Preface

Leh, located amidst snow laden peaks, magnificent mountains and sparkling blue lakes has cast an enchanting spell on thousands of people, making it a popular tourist destination over the years.

However, despite its popularity as a tourist zone, this region continues to be isolated from the social schemes of the government. Many small villages continue to be disconnected due to limited access and connectivity in this region. The limited transportation facilities in this region, restricts access of the people to healthcare facilities in the region.

2.2% of India's population suffers from Disability. For centuries, differently abled people have been stigmatized and marginalized, and some cultures have institutionalized taboos about such people.

The problem is particularly advanced in India where a physical handicap can often bring fear, prejudice and worst of all, significantly reduced opportunities in education and the workforce because of the perception that such people are less efficient.

As per the Census of India (2011), 74,096 individuals suffer from Hearing Disability while 58,137 suffer from Movement Disability in Jammu & Kashmir.

Ratna Nidhi with a mission to uplift people with physical disability in India, embraced on a journey to travel 11,000 feet above sea level and scale its Disability work to Leh in Kashmir.

Ratna Nidhi in association with Rotary Club of Bombay Worli, Rotary Club of Bombay South and the support of Venerable Bhikku

Sanghasena from the Mahabhodi International Mediation Center organized this camp, which has impacted the lives of numerous Kashmiri children, youth and aged beneficiaries.

This report sums up the details of the camp celebrated on the Mahakaruna Diwas (Day of Compassion) and covers heartwarming stories of people, whose lives we have impacted.

Ratna Nidhi's work in the area of Disability spans over 25 years and we have donated over 2.4 lakh mobility equipment's across India.

[Rajiv Mehta,](#)

Trustee

Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust

Mahakaruna Diwas

Ratna Nidhi organized the Disability camp on the auspicious eve of the Mahakaruna Diwas, which is celebrated as the Day of Compassion among Buddhists.

The planning and execution of this project spanned over 6 months, with the screening camp being organized from 24th to 30th April, 2017. The distribution camp for this project was organized from 23rd to 27th June, 2017 at the Mahabhodi Karuna Charitable Hospital. 488 Mobility and Hearing equipment's were distributed at this camp.

Ratna Nidhi's camp was graced by Dr. Kiran Bedi, H.E. the Lt. Governor of Puducherry; Shri Ramdas Athawale, Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India; Dr. Udir Raj, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Northwest Delhi);

Dr. Subachan Ram, Commissioner, Income tax, Mumbai; Swami Anand Krishna, Founder & Spiritual Director, Anand Ashram, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia; Shri Indresh Kumar, Chief Patron, Sindhu Darshan Utsav; Member of Parliament, Ladakh; Shri Nawang Rigzin Jora, Hon'ble MLA, Leh; Shri Thupstan Chhewang, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Ladakh); Shri Chering Dorje, Hon'ble Minister for Ladakh Affairs & Cooperatives, J&K Government.

Mr. Rajiv Mehta, Trustee, Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust was awarded the Mahakaruna Award amidst eminent personalities like Dr. Kiran Bedi and Shri Ramdas Athawale.



From Top: Mr. Rajiv Mehta being felicitated at the Mahakaruna Diwas by Dr. Kiran Bedi; Ms. Asha Mehta being felicitated by Bhikku Sanghasena ji



“Groups like Ratna Nidhi are missionaries and need full support from government and non-government agencies, because whatever you give them, will reach the real beneficiary.”

-Dr. Kiran Bedi



“I am very impressed with the work of Ratna Nidhi for the disabled. Ratna Nidhi has travelled all the way from Mumbai to help the disabled community and I am very happy about that.”

-Shri Ramdas Athawale

From Top-Left: Dignitaries at the camp; Dr. Kiran Bedi lighting the lamp at Ratna Nidhi's camp; Mr. Rajiv Mehta discussing Ratna Nidhi's work with Dr. Kiran Bedi and Shri Ramdas Athawale;

488 Mobility and Hearing Aids Donated

9

Jaipur Foot Donated

5

Prosthetic Hands Donated

74

Calipers Donated

100

Crutches Donated

100

Wheelchairs Donated

200

Hearing Aids Donated

STORIES OF CHANGE



Tsewang Dolma

Age: 67 years | Family Members: 6 | Residence: Stok, Leh | Profession: Unemployed

Growing up in the lovely mountains of Leh, Tsewang Dolma has spent her entire life in the lap of the beautiful mountains. She was married at a young age and worked hard as a peasant all her life to give her children a good life.

However, life had different plans, when suddenly in her late 50's she started experiencing pain in her knees. Her doctor advised her not to worry too much at the start. The pain persisted and on further examination, she was detected with arthritis. Despite being told to take care, she ignored her condition. Having to shoulder financial responsibilities at home and her inability to afford expensive treatment, made her condition

worse.

The pain began to increase and in a few years she was unable to walk. Her children would have to physically move her around.

With a family income of Rs.6000, it is difficult to bear heavy medical expenses for her family. She is mostly bed ridden and doesn't speak much due to all the problems that she has been through.

Tsewang's son shares that **"This wheelchair will help us move her around freely. We can also take her to the Dalai Lama festival, which is a big event for every Ladakhi. For several years she has missed**

it due to her inability to walk. The wheelchair means so much to us and we are extremely grateful to Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust for providing it to my mother for free."

Old age is inevitable and so are the many health issues that accompany it. Having the right support at such an age, to continue with life, is a blessing. We are happy that our effort to provide this wheelchair, plays such a pivotal role in the life of Tsewang Dolma.

“I will always remember Ratna Nidhi in my prayers, for helping me live my life with dignity and independence. God has many ways of showing me he is around, taking care of me silently.”

- *Tsewang Dolma*





Zahur Hussain

Age: 10 years | Family Members: 2 | Residence: Nubra village, Leh | Profession: Student

Danger strikes when one is least expecting it. That is what happened in the case of little Zahur.

At the age of 9, Zahur, touched a live wire at his school ground and lost his hands to bilateral amputation.

Zahur's father recounts "We got a call from Zahur's school, telling us that Zahur had met with an accident and was unconscious. My wife and I rushed to his school, only to find our son unconscious, with his hands severely burnt. Zahur was admitted at the hospital for a month. On examining Zahur at the hospital, the doctors declared that both his hands would have to be amputated below the elbow. My son had barely seen a

few years in his life and had to encounter such a devastating experience."

Zahur, being a shy child, would silently watch his father narrate his story at the camp. On being prodded further, Zahur softly shared **"People stare at me because I have no hands. My friends at school tease me sometimes. I am used to it now."**

Day to day activities like eating, wearing clothes, bathing etc. have been a regular challenge. After being fitted with his new prosthetic hands, little Zahur couldn't stop smiling.

With tears in his eyes his father

shares **"Allah has given my son a second chance at life by sending Ratna Nidhi to my hometown. He can now live life like the other children and not be dependent on others for small things. I am grateful to Ratna Nidhi for this noble humanitarian work of theirs. May Allah bless you."**

The spark in little Zahur's eyes and his dream to soar higher, inspires us to continue empowering thousands of physically disabled patients in India.



“I want my
parents to be
proud of me. I
will be able to
write on my
own and will
study harder.
Inshallah, my
dreams will
come true.”

-Zahur Hussain



Fayaz Ahmed

Age: 21 years | Family Members: 3 | Residence: Kargil | Profession: Unemployed

21-year-old Fayaz grew up in Kargil. Due to extreme poverty conditions at home, he was unable to complete his education and was only able to study until Grade 8.

At the age of 14, Fayaz was infected on both his legs. The infection started spreading and Fayaz was unable to walk because of it.

Due to the absence of a proper hospital in the area, his family took him to Srinagar. At Srinagar the doctor asked him to get admitted and undergo an operation. Post the operation a rod was fitted into his leg. This increased his infection and his situation became worse.

After a few months both his legs were amputated at Kargil. This was a huge loss to Fayaz. His life drastically changed and he was unable to move out of home for several years.

Fayaz narrates **“I was happy the day my legs were amputated. I was living with so much pain before it. When my legs were finally amputated, the pain also subsided along with it.”**

Fayaz’s parents work as agricultural laborers and barely earn a sum of Rs.5000 per month. While Fayaz is currently unemployed due to his condition, his aging parents look

upto him to shoulder financial responsibilities at home.

The Jaipur Foot has instilled a renewed hope in Fayaz to chase his dreams. For a few years he had lost all hopes of working. The Jaipur foot has unleashed his potential to work and earn for his family.

Fayaz, can now pursue his electrician’s course and be employed as an electrician soon. Watching their son walk again, made his family teary eyed. “We thank Allah and Ratna Nidhi, for giving my son a second chance at life”, shared his family.



“My new Jaipur Foot will help me live independently. I can finally train to become an electrician and be employed. My Ammi and Abu are getting older and I need to support them now. Thank you Ratna Nidhi for providing me with this Jaipur foot, which will change my life.”

- *Fayaz Ahmed*



Padma Rigzen

Age: 11 years | Family Members: 2 | Residence: Hampata village, Leh | Profession: Student

11-year-old Padma lives with his mother and grandmother. When he was 5 years old, his parents separated. Ever since then his mother has shouldered all responsibilities in the family.

Padma was born with a partial speech impairment. He also couldn't walk properly due to a defect in his right leg. For many years he has been walking with a limp.

His mother works as a peon at a government office and earns just enough to make ends meet. Despite all her struggles, she has enrolled Padma into a school for differently abled children. She shares "My son has seen a lot of

improvement in his speech, after joining this school. He is very shy and doesn't speak much."

Seeing her son walk better with the calipers, she shared with tears in her eyes **"I have so many dreams for Padma. Seeing him walk like the rest of the children makes me feel happy and at peace. I cannot afford treatment for the defect in his leg and these calipers seem to magically hold my child's legs together."**

Padma loves playing cricket and enjoys eating Chinese. He aspires

to become a teacher someday.

Ratna Nidhi believes that every child and human being deserves to live a life with dignity, irrespective of their disability. The hopes in Padma's mother's eyes for her son, makes us work harder towards our resolves of eradicating physical disability in India.



“I love my mother and want to grow up to be a teacher someday or a cricketer. I already feel, I can walk better with these Calipers. I want to become a big man soon, so that I can take care of my mother.”

-Padma Rigzen



Sonam Dorjey

Age: 81 years | Family Members: None | Residence: Raru village, Zaskar | Profession: Unemployed



Sonam Dorjey spent his life in the beautiful valley of Zaskar as a peasant. In his younger days he lived with his wife and son.

However, as he started getting older, he started facing multiple health issues. He suffers from severe knee pain. Sonam's wife passed away a few years back. While his only son, decided to remove his father from his own house and keep him in an old age home.

Despite all that he has seen, he continues to live life with a smile on his face. On receiving his new crutches from Ratna Nidhi, he was pleasantly happy and shared

“At this age, I have no one who would buy me these crutches. I cannot walk without the support of my sticks. These crutches are better than my older sticks. God bless Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust.”

– Sonam Dorjey



Sonam Yangdol

Age: 69 years | Family Members: 4 | Residence: Zanskar, Kargil | Profession: Unemployed

Sonam was born and brought up in Kargil. She spent her life as a farmer, working hard to raise her four children along with her husband.

Since the past two years, Sonam started experiencing partial hear loss. Unable to buy hearing aids for herself, most of her family members would have to speak at a high volume to her.

Eventually she lost her hearing ability in both the ears. She shares “I miss listening to the radio and my favorite Ladakhi songs.”

When tested with the hearing

aids, she had a broad smile on her face, when she could hear each word of our technicians.

“I can’t explain how I feel right now. Since two years, I have been struggling. I can finally hear my grandchildren and listen to my Ladakhi songs once again. Thank you for providing these hearing machines to me for free.”

- *Sonam Yangdol*





Rizwana Salam

Age: 18 years| Residence: Leh| Family
Members: 4| Profession: Student

“I suffer from Cerebral Palsy and it’s very difficult for my parents to manage my day to day medical expenses sometimes. This wheelchair makes me happy as they can now move me around freely. I would either have to crawl on the floor or be picked up by them, if I wanted to go anywhere. With the wheelchair given by Ratna Nidhi my parents can move me around comfortably. I can also go to school more easily now.”

Tashi Palifor

Age: 63 years| Residence: Leh| Family
Members: 2| Profession: Unemployed

“I lost my hands at the age of 13, when I was hit by an explosive bomb. Ever since then life has been very different, trying to juggle each day with one hand. I wasn’t able to afford any treatment for my condition. When I got to know about Ratna Nidhi distributing artificial limbs, I immediately registered to receive an artificial hand from them. I will now be able to work and perform my day to day activities peacefully. Thank you Ratna Nidhi.”





Tsering Dorje

Age: 67 years| Residence: Tukcha,Leh| Family Members: 5| Profession: Carpenter

“I was hit by a bomb during my childhood, when I was playing. I was hit on my right leg below the knee because of which I had to undergo amputation on that leg. Since the past 27 years I have been moving around on one leg. This Jaipur foot is a blessing in disguise for someone like me as I earn Rs.7000 a month. I can walk comfortably now and also travel far for work and other day to day activities without having to think twice. I need not be dependent on my family members either.”

Tazin Stanzin

Age: 14 years| Residence: Hunder, Leh| Family Members: 3| Profession: Student

“I have a limp since childhood while I walk. I stay with my mom and grandparents and they always take care of me. My mom works as a peon and works very hard to ensure I have a good life. I love science and want to grow up and be an astronaut. My favorite sport is Football and with the help of these calipers, I hope to start my football practice soon.”





Paldan Tsomo

Age: 83 years | Residence: Phobrang, Leh |
Family Members: 1 | Profession: Unemployed

“I live by myself and at this age have no income. I have severe knee problem since many years. These crutches will help me walk. I couldn't have afforded to buy these by myself. Thank you Ratna Nidhi for supporting me in my old age. It means a lot.”

Dolma Yanzin

Age: 65 years| Residence: Zanskar, Kargil
Family Members: 3 | Profession: Farmer

“Since the past few years I have been suffering from hearing loss. It is quite difficult for me to manage my day to day activities without a hearing machine. I am extremely grateful to get these hearing aids from Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust.”





“At the end of the day it’s not
what you have, or even what
you have accomplished.

It’s about who you have lifted
up, who you have made better.

It’s about what you have given
back.”

-Denzel Washington





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