



Training and Distribution of Assistive Technology Devices
On 20-07-2017 at RISE INSTITUTE Jawahar Nagar Srinagar.



KDF – Humanitarian Aid Project for Rehabilitation of Visually Impaired People by Pellet injuries in Kashmir

HELP Foundation, J&K and Kashmir Development Foundation- UK are working together for rehabilitation of visually impaired persons who lost their eyesight by pellet injuries in Kashmir Division. The use of pellet guns was introduced by the state police in 2010 to control public protests and mass disobedience. Since then more than 100 people were killed during the protests. More than 1100 people have lost eye sight due to pellets as per media reports and out of those 64 have injuries in both eyes. Doctors at SMHS Srinagar say they remove pellets from some patients and in most of the cases, doctors say they are not able to remove it from the eye. Some patients make a good recovery, but in most of the cases, the patients fail to regain vision. No case has been reported so far in which the doctors successfully restored full vision.



HELP Foundation, J&K conducted a survey in February- March 2017 to ascertain the number of persons with eye injuries by pellets from 2010. The survey revealed that the number of pellet survivors in ten districts is 535, which include 48 survivors with both eyes impaired. It was not possible to extend all the pellet survivors because people refuse to provide the information for many reasons.



The persons with eyesight loss can be rehabilitated in terms of assistive technology for accessibility and education, Livelihood, Medical support and advocacy. Assistive technology is an interdisciplinary field of knowledge comprising products, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices, and services that aim to promote functionality for visually impaired people with regard to autonomy, independence, quality of life, and social inclusion. 14 beneficiaries with Blindness were identified and selected for the training and distribution of Assistive Technology

The training and distribution programme on Assistive Technology conducted by HELP Foundation J & K under Humanitarian Aid Project for Rehabilitation of persons with eye sight loss by pellets in Kashmir Division supported by Kashmir Development Foundation-UK

Devices. Blindness is the term used to describe the total loss of vision and conditions in which individuals need to rely predominantly on vision substitution skills. In the educational field, a blind student does not use vision in the learning process. The loss of visual ability causes unfavourable consequences at both the individual and collective levels. Blindness generates psychological, social, and economic problems as well as problems concerning the quality of life, since it may lead to loss of self-esteem and autonomy. Assistive technology resources are increasingly becoming a concrete means of access to information, communication, and social inclusion.

At the workshop, the participants shared their stories, of life after the pellet injury, each a tale of devastated lives, dependence and shattered aspirations.



Whenever I hold him in my lap I cannot see his face however hard I try. I can hear his sounds, can feel him but cannot see him,” Arshid Ahmed, 23, says of his eight-month-old baby boy. Arshid lost his eyesight when pellets fired by government forces fired pellets into a protest demonstration in Shopian on July 29 last year perforated both his eyes.



“I wanted to be a teacher and a cricketer too. Now I just feel sorry for myself when I hear kids playing around,” says Adil Reyaz, a 21-year-old student from Karimabad, Pulwama. “Pellets shattered all my dreams,” he says and lowers his head.

Riyaz was in the first year of the Bachelor of Computer Applications course when he pellets blinded him last year. He not



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only dropped out of the studies but hardly moves out of his house. “How many times will I ask my brother to hold my arm so that I can go out of the house,” he asks, his voice full of anger and frustration.

Another 21-year-old and his namesake Adil Rashid from Dalgam, Anantnag, says, “When I completed my diploma in electronics from Jammu, I was perhaps the happiest man with hopes of a bright future.” Rashid had opened a mobile repair shop at Achabal just before Kashmir erupted over Burhan’s killing. “Being the eldest of siblings and a disabled person now is killing me every day,” he says.

The training and distribution workshop was organized by HELP Foundation J & K under Humanitarian Aid Project supported by Kashmir Development Foundation UK. The organization aims to work for long term rehabilitation of pellet survivors in Kashmir Division. The assistive technology devices include Samsung Galaxy J2 Pro (2016) Android Phone and Smartcane Device. A one-day training programme was conducted to equip the beneficiaries with skills for use of the devices. The duration of the training is usually three days, but the beneficiaries are from remote areas, disabled and unwilling to go for a three-day workshop due to the prevailing conditions in the valley. We discussed the issues with the trainer and he assured that the training can be provided in a day; however, it is possible to follow up with refresher training.

HELP Foundation, J&K is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) working for the Psycho Social and Socio economic development of victims of Kashmir Conflict. The core areas of intervention remain Education, Health Care and Economic empowerment of Women and youth. Besides, relief and rehabilitation of traumatised widows and orphan children under the banner of SHEHJAR- cool shadow of a tree of dignity and empowerment.

Kashmir Development Foundation (KDF) is a civil society organisation working for community development and empowering the voices of the underrepresented people and communities to help create the conditions for an open, peaceful, inclusive and prosperous society by supporting communities to engage in collective action for transformative change.

For HELP Foundation J & K

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