

## **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AL-JALAL WELFARE TRUST: A CASE FROM PAKISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

*Social entrepreneur is referred as a person who attain advanced and innovative ideas to take initiatives in solving the society's problems such initiatives involves risk and a determined mind. The case study is about love of a father (Mr. Jalal Akbar Dar) for his son (Bilal Akbar Dar) who is suffering from 'Down Syndrome'. Today's Down syndrome is a major social problem among children in the world and especially in Pakistan. This study targets that social problem in Pakistan by highlighting the efforts of a social entrepreneur (Mr Jalal Akbar Dar) who puts his best efforts in developing a special institute for children suffering from 'Down Syndrome' so that they could enjoy the normal life. In Pakistan it is the first ever step since the independence of Pakistan in that direction to bring s children back towards their normal life.*

*Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Sociopreneur, Social Problems, AL Jalal Welfare Trust, Pakistan*

## INTRODUCTION

The field of social entrepreneurship has gained a visible attention in today's world (Nicholls, 2005). Many articles, research papers, journals, conferences are debating about this topic. Today the society, we are living in is facing imbalance behaviour related to economic, social and environmental spheres. Such events adversely effects the society in many ways. So this is a public debate focused on finding solutions.

Social entrepreneur is referred as a person who attain advanced and innovative ideas to take initiatives in solving the society's problems such initiatives involves risk and a determined mind. Social entrepreneurs uses their ability to, Create a mission to support social value, Seek new opportunities to support the mission, Continue in the process of growth and learning.

## Background

On Feb 14, 2001 Jalal Akbar Dar was blessed with a baby boy. Like everyone else he was also very happy and he had future plans for his child. Till then when the doctor told that his child was born with a disability named 'Down Syndrome'. He had been running many welfare projects for needy and poor people including some initiative work for special children. So he had the basic knowledge about this disability. But the birth of disabled child in his own house was not less than a test for him. With the passage of time he and his wife looked up to this courageously and considered themselves to be the chosen one for this test.

When Bilal (his son) reached to an age where normal children usually get their school started, he searched for an institution where he could read and write. But this turned out to be the dreadful hurdle because such children are taught under the same roof with duff, dumb and MR. this was a turn down point because Bilal was physically active ad was only slow learner and was few years behind his age. It was clear that he wouldn't be able to get progressed with children with strong disabilities and would feel left out that would be total injustice for him.

## The search begins

Jalal Akbar Dar didn't stopped here, visited many other schools and institutions and was greatly disappointed by the way deaf, dumb, MR, blind children are gathered under same roof and none of them are given the sort of attention they need and deserve. He didn't want his child to be ignored in this way. But did not had any other option and sent Bilal to few schools and institutions for initial trial bases. There was no such positive results as expected. He tried to get his admission in school for normal children but they refused to take him because he was slow learner and well behind his age. He did his best to find alternative solution but all in vain.

'If you don't find a helping hand for your problem, take a stand for yourself and be your own helping hand'. Jalal Dar did the same thing, after all this discouragement, he was encouraged to make an effort by himself. He did a lot of research about this, the institutions people who are working for the welfare of Down syndrome children. But he was disappointed because there wasn't any separate institutions working for D/S children. At that time the thought crossed his mind that can he be the one who can take this initiative? And the answer was yes.

### **Awareness of Down syndrome disability**

Down syndrome is a genetic problem in which 21<sup>st</sup> pair of chromosome has an extra chromosome. It is also known as trisomy. Down syndrome was firstly detected by John Lendon Down during his research on mental disordering among children's (Brain, 1967). The Down syndrome was recognized by the word 'mangol' so at first Mr. Jalal named the school after this i.e. 'mangol child'. Wherever the parents of D/S children were brought up with the discussion about their child, they turned out to be all confused about the needs and wants of their child with the passage of time he realized that people aren't aware of this term and its consequences. After the birth of his child, his biggest dream was to make a big institution for Down syndrome children.

### **Al-Jalal Welfare Trust: History of Building**

The present five story building complex wasn't made with the smooth and quick decision. It took so much time to build the base and the initial stages are always tough and Mr. Jalal was ready for all the consequences. He took a start from a room in his house with consultation of children's parents and few D/S children. For this he took initial help from his friends and close relatives to arrange a van for children. The big problem that aroused was to make the parents aware with DS disability and what does this means.

### **Facilities**

The institute provides all the necessities to the children. The facilities of Physiotherapy speech therapy, educational facility medical facility, and hostel where they get shelter and get themselves flourished but this could be useless if the parents don't find a need of this institution for their child.

### **Initial journey**

So, the journey began in 2010, Mr. Jalal visited so many cities of Pakistan and spread the awareness among parents, doctors, journalists in short people belonging to many fields

because it was necessary to make the maximum amount of people aware of this so that they can help their children or D/S child they know somewhere around. It was important to convince people that D/S children need special care and attention in comparison with other children.

### **Financing**

After this awareness campaign in all over Pakistan, he started working for institute made for D/S children. As it is said 'that charity begins at home'. He donated his personal property. The former years turned out to be the hard ones to look for financial resources, he contacted many people. It wasn't that easy to lower his pride and forget who he was once. He beg for charity on road. Did door to door fund raising. He could hire a team for this but they might take this as their work only and so it wasn't the matter of shame for him when he with his co-workers spent nights on roads and collected charity from people.' When there's a will, there is a way' many doors were closed upon his face but many doors were opened and found some good donors for charity. This wasn't a fight for few days and months. This led to a quite long time.

### **Foundation of institute**

After this hard time, the foundation of this institute was laid on 15 may, 2015. The opening was grand including people within and outside the city. With the name of Allah, the foundation was laid. The hard part wasn't done yet. The construction was to be made with the financial crisis that weren't over yet did the charity work side by side. Convinced many people to donate and gave each and every detail about construction. The response from people was nil but all of them were not with negative vibes, few of them supportive actively.

### **Government Support**

For the above mentioned all reasons, he started a campaign in which he requested prime minister of Pakistan to look forward to this project and help accordingly. On 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2014, he did a campaign in which he visited the four provinces and met their Chief Ministers personally with his staff, family and few D/S children. Mr. Jalal requested them to take notice of this issue that D/S should be fifth disability in Pakistan and play their part accordingly. There are separate institutions working for blind, deaf, dumb, physically, disable and MR children but Down syndrome children are laid out of this category. No proper such initiatives are taken for them. It was his dream that D/S should be declared as fifth disability so that proper work can made on this issue at Government level. Government should pay proper attention in making separate institutions for Down syndrome children because their needs are different from other children. These campaigns were successful to the contest that chief ministers of Pakistan took

step and promised to work for making down syndrome fifth disability in Pakistan and donated 1 crore for initial help so that the construction of institution can be made quick.

### **History of Campaigns**

On 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013, a walk was made from Al-Jalal institute that headed towards Lahore in which Mr. Jalal personally participated. After the time of 7 days they did a walk from Jhelum to Lahore and ended up at chief justice place and appealed for the same request 'To make D/S fifth disability in Pakistan'.

March 2012, the year was fully filled with many campaigns for the visit of special institutions in Jhelum. Contacted many journalists and did best to spread this message to all over. The crew under supervision of Mr. Jalal went to Lahore press club and Islamabad press club for spreading the message and holding the same request.

The construction of Al-Jalal institute was on its peak. Four floors were completed but still work was left to be done. The institute in spite of incompleteness worked anyway and admissions were made of D/S children. Fifty students were hostelized in here and all the expenses were bear by the trust. They are provided with every therapy, medical facility, educational facility and hostel facility.

In March, 2015, stayed at Lahore camped at main public places and did awareness campaigns with the same request statement 'To make D/S fifth disability in Pakistan.

### **Problems**

The journey up till now wasn't easy but year 2016 turned out to be the worst one. The institute faced the worst of all times. Many politicians did their best to give the hardest set back to this work. Directly and indirectly created problems. These problems weren't vanished overnight. This took so long many politicians created problems for passing the map of institute for their personal mean. For which Mr. Jalal had to protest under the open sky with few grown up Down syndrome children of institute and spent many nights like this, slept on roads to strike and strive for rights. At that hard time, many people left him all alone because it is well said that 'hard times, reveals good friends'. But some stood by his side firmly. 'There is no one but Allah you can completely trust'. He always had faith in Allah and was shown His mercy in every difficult situation.

After all this rise and fall finally in 21<sup>st</sup> march (World's Down syndrome day) inauguration of Al-Jalal institute for D/S children was made that was a grand function in which people from many cities attended. And their response was quite positive. The inauguration was made by Mr. Jalal Akbar's son Bilal Akbar Dar who was the reason that led Mr. Jalal to be the chosen one for this work and to take initiative for the ignored souls.

## **Trust Facilities**

All the basic equipment for physiotherapy provided with well trained staff for assistance. The medicines are free of cost for the D/S children.

Proper incentives are provided to poor, needy, homeless children. This include both normal as well as Down syndrome children. The facilities of physiotherapy and medical are provided free to the people who can't afford the expense. Every Friday a medical camp is settled in which the doctors examine the patients and prescribe them medicines accordingly.

## **Marketing**

This wasn't a commercial institution so its marketing strategies supposed to be different. Some donors took the responsibility of printing of posters. This includes Pina Flex posters and cards. The posters on the visible places across the cities. The next important mean of spreading this voice was social media i.e. Facebook. The website was always up to date with all the happenings did a great support in this regard.

## **Response from the Governors**

- Governors Punjab Chaudhary M. Sarwar did a warm welcome to D/S children and his response was unexpected and he promised to help accordingly.
- Governor KPK Shauqat Ali Khan donated funds for the institute and arranged a spectacular dinner function for the children.
- Governor Sindh Ashrat Al-Ibad positively responded when he was told about all the progress under this issue and declared fund raising scheme for D/S children and promised to work for declaring D/S fifth disability in Sindh and initiatives were also taken regarding this.
- Governors of Balochistan like all other governors warmly welcome the staff and D/S children and promised to raise funds for Jhelum and to work for declaring Down syndrome fifth disability in Pakistan.

## **Looking Forwards**

The building of the institute is not yet fully completed. The top floors are still under construction. The finishing is still to be done. Regarding the future educational system, to get admission of around 250 D/S children, people from far distinct cities face difficulties in contacting and gathering information about the institution. So, the first most priority is to open branch offices in other cities like Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala. The mission of declaring D/S as fifth disability at government level is the mentioned earlier about its importance

and certain steps taken for it. In future different campaigns, would be made to achieve this goal. Al Jalal institute under the supervision of Mr. Jalal Akbar Dar is still working to make progress in future and planning to solve some of other problems in the society, like education for the poor children. He is planning to open a school under the name Al Jalal School system.





Outdoor games آؤٹ ڈور گیمز



Workshop boys بچوں کیلئے ورکشاپ



speech therapy **سپیچ تھراپی لیب**



workshop girls

بچیوں کیلئے ورکشاپ



Computer lab

کمپیوٹر لیب



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