

## **BEHALA BODHAYAN : ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09**

Behala Bodhayan is marching ahead steadily towards its youth for another year. The main aim of Behala Bodhayan is not only to impart education, vocational training, sports and provide various therapies viz. early intervention, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychological counseling and speech therapy to the students of our Special School and Samarth–CBS inmates but also involve them in training in music, dance, art and craft and make them self-sufficient through Vocational Training in our Sheltered Workshop and bring them back in the mainstream of the society. Parents Counseling and self-advocacy of our students are amongst the activities in our priority list. The main activities carried out in our Organisation during the year 2008-09 are summarised under the following broad heads:-

### **Special School :**

In the Academic year 2008-09 the Special School has progressed significantly in its teaching – learning activities and also other co-curricular activities. The total number of students in this year is 84 students. There are 20 students in the Pre-Primary Section, 12 students in the Primary Section, 5 students in the Secondary Section, 10 students in the Pre-Vocational Unit, 15 students in the Vocational Unit, 12 students in the Care Group and 10 Hearing Impaired students. Other than our own students, many more children with special needs come to our Outdoor Department for various therapeutic treatments. A sufficient number of qualified and dedicated Special Educators, Assistant Teachers and Staff are rendering services to these children efficiently. Besides these Staff, we have provided for part-time services of a Physiotherapist, a Speech Therapist, a Psychologist, an Occupational Therapist and also a Dance and Music Teacher. We have also enrolled a Yoga Teacher and a Sports Instructor for the overall development of our students. On the occasion of World Disabled's Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2008 the State Government had conferred the State Award of Role Model to our SAMARTH Resident, Shri Pinku Das. The Award was handed over by the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal in the presence of the Hon'ble Minister, Social Welfare Department, W.B. in a function held in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata.

### **SAMARTH-CBS Centre:**

The Samarth-CBS Centre of the National Trust running since 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2006 has been able to maintain high quality of services and provide the beneficiaries with good quality food and accommodation. The Centre was officially inaugurated by the Chairperson of the National Trust on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2006. Care is taken throughout the year to maintain an interaction of the SAMARTH residential students of Behala Bodhayan with the community. They have also been felicitated by many Puja Organizers for their participation in giving entertainment through their programmes. The students were taken to Puja Pandals in the evenings wearing new dresses. The students enjoyed these outings very much. They are also being taken to picnics and short trips. Routine Medical Check up and treatments are provided to the Residents. Arrangements have been made with Specialized Doctors for regular visits to the SAMARTH Centre.

The activities of our SAMARTH Centre are being carried out as per the prescribed procedures and norms. We have 15 Male and 9 Female beneficiaries in our Centre. Female beneficiaries are less in numbers because their families prefer not to reveal their disability and keep them within the family itself. However, we give preference to female candidates for admission as and when guardians of such candidates come to our Centre. Out of the above 24 beneficiaries, in the Long Term residential

facilities we have been maintaining 9 poor Male and 6 poor Female candidates free of charge thus bringing the total number of BPL Candidates to 15 as against the mandatory figure of 9 BPL beneficiaries. As regards the disability-wise break-up of the beneficiaries we have 9 Male and 7 Female in the Mental Retardation Category, 1 Male C.P. and 5 Male and 2 Female candidates in the Multiple Disabilities Category in the Long Term Residential Care.

### **Vocational Training :**

Our students in both the Pre-Vocation and Vocational Training Unit are undergoing training under three experienced Vocational Instructors. We are also utilising the services of our Occupational Therapist who is an Expert in finding the aptitude and potentialities of each and every student. He is also an Expert in motivating the trainees some of whom are otherwise indifferent to their training Programme. Our trainees have become proficient in embroidery work, envelope-making, jute file making, garland making with artificial flower, rakhis, candles and various other items which are very attractive and useful for daily use. These have good market potentialities. We are making efforts to enlarge the capacity and the scale of production thereby paving the way for an income for the beneficiaries.

A group of grown-up students numbering 20 (16 Males and 4 Females) had undergone Vocational Training in different Trades in the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled, Kolkata which is a Government of India Organisation. This Vocational training course has since been completed. We are looking for getting orders to provide these trained beneficiaries with an opportunity for earning a livelihood within our Sheltered Workshop. These 20 Trainees include 10 Male and 3 Female beneficiaries of our SAMARTH – CBS Centre.

7 Male and 2 Female beneficiaries of the SAMARTH-CBS and 4 other adults of our Special School totaling to 13 persons have also undergone a 3-Months Sewing Machine Operators' Training Course which was conducted by the ATDC, Salt Lake City, Kolkata under the Sponsorship of the National Trust during November, 2008 to March, 2009. The Principal of the ATDC will arrange a Campus Interview with the prospective Employers and it is hoped that 2 to 3 persons will get outside employment soon. We are also trying to procure orders from the large Garment Manufacturers for assembly line production for the remaining trained persons of the Sewing Machine Operators' Course within our own Vocational Unit.

We had submitted an application for Registration with ARUNIM, a National Trust Initiative. ARUNIM had also confirmed our Registration as a Member. A Vocational Instructor of our Organisation participated in the 4-day Residential Training in the "Micro Enterprise Development and Management Orientation Programme" in New Bongaigaon, Assam from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.

Two members of our Organisation along with a person with Mental Retardation attended the inauguration ceremony of the ARUNIM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2008 in New Delhi. Thereafter, they participated in the Exhibition held in Dilli Haat from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 along with the products made by the Residents of the SAMARTH-CBS and other students of our Vocational Training Centre. ARUNIM helped us to sell the products in the exhibition. We are thankful to the National Trust for their efforts through ARUNIM and also directly to make our Vocational Centre and Sheltered Workshop an economically viable Unit.

### **DLRO Activities (Sarva Sikhsha Mission, Kolkata) :**

Behala Bodhayan is working as a Consultant termed as District Level Resource Organisation

**(DLRO)** of the Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004 having a jurisdiction of 380 Council Schools covering 45 numbers of Wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation and 50 Primary Schools of the Corporation itself. We perform these duties meticulously and consider it as our social responsibility. We provide this service with a view to reach out to the lower strata of the Society and bring such children with special needs within the fold of education in the mainstream.

Four Special Educators under our DLRO attended the One-Day training programme on "Learning Disability and its Practical Aspects" held on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 at Jagadbandhu Institution, Kolkata. An Awareness Programme was held at Bamunpara High School, Burdwan district on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008 to sensitize the persons of the villages about the problems of the persons with Mental Retardation, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Disabilities and their families. A Meeting was held between our DLRO representatives and Sarva Shiksha Mission on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 to discuss the issues on execution of IED activities. Our D.L.R.O. Special Educators participated in several Awareness Workshops, Screening Camps for identification of children with special needs, Sensitisation programmes throughout the year. Other than these, many Sensitisation Programmes on the rights and facilities available to the persons with disabilities were also organized by them for the benefit of the society.

#### **Nari Shilpa Niketan- Food Processing Unit :**

Our Food Processing Unit, Nari Shilpa Niketan has been producing different Food items viz. Jam, Jelly, Tomato Sauce, Vinegar and various other products of Grade I quality under the Brand name **Caprio** for the last few years. These products have got FPO Registration from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India and Trade License from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and are sold in the open market and to the Cooperative Societies. Production of Food Products has risen considerably and its demand in the market is satisfactory. Our food products are of very good quality and are popular to the consumers. A large plot of land has been purchased at Ram Road, Sarsuna and the Unit will be shifted there after construction of the Factory Shed etc. We wish to enhance the scale of production in future. However, this will be possible if we can make arrangement for adequate working capital and trained manpower.

#### **Sports & Games :**

Our students have participated in different sports and games throughout the year. The students of Behala Bodhayan were invited to participate in the Volleyball State Championship organised by the Special Olympics, Bharat on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2008. A Training Camp on Bochi was organized by Special Olympics at the SAI Campus, Salt Lake from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. Ten children from our Special School participated in this Training Camp and were awarded prizes for their good performance.

On the occasion of Children's Day, a State level Table Tennis Competition was organized by the Bengal Table Tennis Association. 8 children of Behala Bodhayan participated in this event and they were given certificates of participation. 8 children ( 4 boys and 3 girls ) escorted by 2 teachers and staff of Behala Bodhayan participated in the Bochi Training Camp organized by the Special Olympics at Darbhanga, Bihar from 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2008.

#### **Cultural & Recreational activities :**

4 students of our School participated in the Group Dance Programme organized by Calcutta Blind School, Behala. The students of Behala Bodhayan observed the Bengali New Years' Day on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 through different programmes throughout the day. The children also

participated in the New Year Celebration organized By Sab Payechir Asar at Deshbandhu Park on that day.

The children with disabilities participated in the Handicraft Exhibition held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008 at Rammohan Library. On 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2008 the children participated in a cultural programme organized by State Bank of India at Bharat Sevashram Sangha Head Office. The presentation of Behala Bodhayan was appreciated by the Dignitaries and high Officials of the Bank and they promised to arrange for some Scholarship for our children. Rabindra Jayanti, the birth anniversary of the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore was celebrated at the School premises. The students observed the day through Recitation, Song and Dance of the poet. The students participated in a Dance Competition organised by Manindra Library Seva Samity, New Alipore on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2008.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 the children of Behala Bodhayan participated in a music and dance programme organized by Sab Payechir Asar. The 51<sup>st</sup> Independence Day was celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 at the School premises in the presence of teachers and guardians. Our National Flag was hoisted by Shri Dibyen Mukherjee, I.A.S., Director of Education, Government of West Bengal. He was given a Guard of Honour by our students. The students then took part in a cultural programme based on patriotic songs in the Auditorium of Sarsuna High School. Shri Dibyen Mukherjee, Shri Dipak Kumar Dutta Gupta, members of the Executive Committee of Behala Bodhayan, Special Educators and parents of the students of our Special School were present in this programme. The children from R.C.F.C. participated in this programme and were awarded for their good performance. Raksha Bandhan was observed on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 at the School premises. Members of Rotoract Club visited our School and presented our children with Rakhis and other gifts. The children enjoyed the day very much. On 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2008, the students observed the Teachers' Day with solemnity and dignity. The Special Educators and other SAMARTH Staff were offered Gift items made in the Vocational Unit.

A Sit & Draw Competition was organised by Antarleena Memorial Trust in our School premises on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 where children of our Special School along with the normal children of different schools of the locality took part in the event. Children's Day was observed on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 in the School premises. The children presented a programme of dance and music before the guests, teachers and staff. The prizes for the Sit and Draw Competition held on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 were given off to the children during this programme. A Cultural programme was arranged on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 by the Inner Wheel Club at the Life Saving Society, Kolkata. The children of our Special School took part in this programme and were appreciated for their presentation.

World Disability Day was observed in the Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2008. All our Students including the SAMARTH Residents attended a colourful Rally held in Rani Rashmoni Road, Kolkata. The Organisers had provided a Bus free of charge for our students numbering about 50 and their escorts. Our children participated in dance programme before the gathering. They enjoyed the trip very much.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, the Residents of SAMARTH Project were invited to perform a Dance Drama in Chandi Mela which was visited by a large gathering. The members of the public highly acclaimed their performance on the stage.

Besides these, our students are taken to Sab Payechir Asar twice a week on a routine basis to have a chance for social integration.

### **Social Commitment :**

Our Organisation has been in the forefront in fulfilling the social commitments during the year 2008-09. These programmes include an **Awareness Programme** which was organised by us in the Marine Engineering College Auditorium at P-19, Taratola Road, Kolkata – 700 088 on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 from 11:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. The parents of the persons with disabilities, Special Educators and Social Workers from different Organisations of the city attended this Programme. The Programme started with the prayer song sung by the students of Behala Bodhayan. Artificial flower bouquets made by the children of our Special School were presented to the Guests and Dignitaries seated on the Dias. Swami Swapan Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sangha inaugurated the Programme by lighting the Lamp. Other Dignitaries viz. Shri Dilip Chakraborty, IAS, Director, Mass Education Extension Department, Government of West Bengal, Shri S.C. Sarkar, Rehabilitation Officer and Shri Pradip Acharya, Vocational Instructor of the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped, Government of India, Dr. Thomas Kishore, Director, NIMH, BonHooghly, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Basu, Working President, Sab Payechir Asar, Shri Dilip Sen, Secretary, Kolkata District of Paschim Banga Rajya Pratibandhi Sammelani, Smt. Anita Mitra, Ex-D.M.E.E.O., Mass Education Extension Department, Shri Amalendu Mitra, Advocate, Supreme Court, Shri Dipak Kumar Dutta Gupta, Advocate, High Court and many others were present in the Awareness Programme. Besides, many parents and siblings connected with the children with disabilities were amongst the audience.

After the Inaugural Programme, Shri Dilip Chakraborty delivered a Speech on the facilities provided by the Mass Education Extension Department to the Special Children. The parents of the persons with disabilities, Special Educators, Social Workers who were present in the audience were greatly enlightened by this deliverance.

Dr. Ramesh Chandra Basu, representing Sab Payechir Asar highlighted the activities of the Organisation in bringing about mental and physical fitness of not only normal children but also the children with physical and mental difficulties. He also informed the audience that Sab Payechir Asar has been in hand and glove relationship since the inception of Behala Bodhayan and has also arranged camps for the children of this Organisation many times as extra curricular activities.

Shri S.C.Sarkar, Rehabilitation Officer, Vocational Rehabilitation Centre informed how the capabilities of the persons with disabilities are adjudged after evaluating their human potentialities and then their type of work are selected according to their abilities. After proper training, these persons can be brought to the mainstream of the society and they can get an opportunity to earn their livelihood. Shri Pradip Acharya informed how the persons with disabilities are evaluated and how the categories of trades for which the training is to be imparted are selected taking into consideration the age level and I.Q. level of these persons. Generally, training in trades like candle – making, paper bag making, carpentry etc are imparted for the persons with disabilities.

Dr. Thomas Kishore delivered a Speech along with Video clippings on the topic “Understanding and controlling the behavioral problems of the persons with disabilities arising in their adolescence period”. The Guardians present in the Auditorium had many queries regarding the problems of the persons with disabilities and Dr. Kishore provided all the answers and informed them how the behavioral problems of the persons with disabilities could be modified. This interactive and informative deliberations were very much appreciated by the parents and the Special Educators.

Shri Amalendu Mitra, Advocate delivered a Speech on “Legal Rights and Protection for the persons with disabilities”. He informed the audience about the legal aspects of the rights and protections available under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 and the National Trust Act, 1999. The Awareness Programme ended with a vote of thanks by Shri Sasanka Sekhar Ghosh, President of Behala Bodhayan.

A Seminar on “Vocational Training & Sheltered Workshop” was also organised at Behala Bodhayan Special School premises at 197-B, Jadav Ghosh Road, Kolkata – 700 061 on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 from 10:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Special Educators from different Organisations of the city attended this Programme. The Programme started with the prayer song sung by the students of Behala Bodhayan. Artificial flower bouquets made by the children of our Special School were presented to the Guests and Dignitaries. Shri Ketaki Shankar Adhikaree, Assistant Commissioner for the persons with disabilities inaugurated the Seminar by lighting the Lamp. Other Dignitaries included Smt. Chandrika Rani, Asst. Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped, Government of India, Shri Pradip Acharya of VRC, Shri Dipak Kumar Dutta Gupta, Advocate, Smt. Shampa Mukherjee, Psychologist amongst others.

Shri Ketaki Shankar Adhikaree informed the participants how the persons with disabilities can be employed in Corporate Sector Offices. He also informed the audience about the procedure for obtaining Legal Guardianship for the persons with mental retardation, autism etc. who have attained the age of 18 years and also the Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme introduced by the National Trust for the benefit of the persons with disabilities. The audience was enlightened about the procedures and papers necessary for obtaining Legal Guardianship and the Health Insurance Scheme of the National Trust.

Shri Dipak Kumar Dutta Gupta delivered his speech about the right to work and equal opportunities for the persons with disabilities. Smt. Shampa Mukherjee, Psychologist stressed on the Vocational Counseling and necessity of Vocational Training for these children. She also provided all the answers to the questions raised by the Parents and the Guardians about the vocational training and employment aspects of these children.

Shri Nikhil Bhartiya, a person with Cerebral Palsy who has successfully established himself in his father’s business also attended this Seminar and encouraged the students of Behala Bodhayan. He shared his experiences as to how he had overcome his disability by sheer perseverance and mental strength.

On 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 Paschim Banga Rajya Sammelani, Kolkata district organised its 1<sup>st</sup> Seminar at Indian Science Congress Hall, Park Circus at 10:00 A.M. Dignitaries like Hon’ble Minister of Sundarban Development Department, Shri Kanti Ganguly, Shri Sadhan Gupta, Shri

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Shyamal Mondal, Principal, Behala Blind School and many more were present in this Meeting. Discussions regarding developmental activities and rehabilitation for the children with disabilities also took place in this Meeting. Behala Bodhayan was represented by Shri Sasanka Sekhar Ghosh, President, Smt. Rikta Ghosh and Smt. Gita Bose.

Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme : We have submitted 117 applications from our Organisation for registration under the Scheme which included all the 24 beneficiaries of the SAMARTH – CBS. We have received 77 Smart Cards so far. We are yet to receive the Smart Cards of the last lot of 40 students and we expect to get them from the Insurance Company

soon.

On 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, the President and Vice-President of Behala Bodhayan participated in the review meeting of SNAC / SNAP / SAMARTH conducted by the National Trust in New Delhi.

A Meeting was held in the Rotunda of Writers Buildings at 4 p.m. on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 on "Incentives to Employers in the Private Sector for providing employment to Persons with Disabilities". This Meeting was convened by Shri Trilochan Singh, IAS, Principal Secretary, Labour Department, Government of West Bengal. The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industries, CTTI, ITPA Jalpaiguri, Ramkrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy, Narendrapur and Behala Bodhayan amongst others were invited to participate in the Meeting. Shri S.S.Ghosh, President and Shri Nilotpal Chakrovarti, Vice-President, Behala Bodhayan attended the Meeting.

Shri K.M. Acharya, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Ashish Kumar, Deputy Director General, MSJE, Ms. Rinchen Tempo, IAS, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Shri Trilochan Singh, IAS, Principal Secretary, Labour Department and Ms. Uma Mukherjee, Commissioner for the Persons with Disabilities, Government of West Bengal, Senior Officials from the Office of Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Regional Director, ESI and other Senior Officials of the Social Welfare Department were present in the Meeting.

Presiding over the Meeting Shri K.M. Acharya, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, MSJE explained the provisions of the Scheme which stipulates *inter alia* a provision of Rs.1,800 crores during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan covering the Private Sector Employers for creation of one lac jobs per year for the Persons with Disabilities including the Persons with Mental Retardation. Private Sector Employers who are employing the Persons with Disabilities as defined in the PWD Act, 1995 and the National Trust Act, 1999 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2008 will be eligible for the incentives. The incentives available to the Private Sector Employers are Employers share of Provident Fund Contribution and ESI Subscription (Less 1.1 % of the Administrative Charge) for a period of 3 years and in respect of those employees who are paid a monthly wage up to Rs.25,000.00. There are also various other incentives to Private Employers such as Prestigious National Awards etc.

The general consensus of the Meeting was that the Persons with Disabilities are able to work equally with their counterparts in the same work environment and sometimes prove themselves more than equals. As such, The Employers will soon realize the worthiness of these Persons with Special Needs.

Shri S.S.Ghosh suggested that there should be 1% job reservation for the Mentally Challenged in addition to 3% already provided for other disabilities in the PWD Act, 1995. Since there is a move to

amend the PWD Act, 1995 and the National Trust Act, 1999, this is the proper time for the Government to bring this amendment to provide for 1% job reservation for the Mentally Challenged. He also emphasized that empowering the Sheltered Workshops by providing financial assistance and making arrangement for sale of the products through Government intervention is the need of the hour.

If the Scheme takes off well there will be a hope for the SAMARTH beneficiaries who are trained in different Vocational trades will find an opportunity to get open market employment sooner or later.

### **Picnic and Outing for Social Integration:**

On the occasion of Durga Puja the students of Behala Bodhayan and the inmates of SAMARTH Residential Centre were taken out to visit different Puja Pandals on the days of Sashthi and Saptami, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. The children enjoyed the days very much.

Behala Bodhayan organised a day-long picnic and excursion on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 at Naopala near Kolaghat in Midnapore District of West Bengal. A total number of 148 persons including all the SAMARTH Residents, Staff, Students of the Special School, Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff and the Guardians had participated in the picnic. The children with Mental Retardation, Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities were taken for the said picnic and excursion along with their families, social workers, Special Educators and Care Givers. Sri Sridhar Majumdar, Chartered Accountant, Prof. A.K.Bhattacharya and his family were amongst our Guests. The main idea of the picnic was to bring about social integration and render the mentally challenged persons a taste of freedom and enjoyment in the open surroundings. Two 55-Seater Luxury Buses and two 8-Seater vehicles were arranged for taking the participants to the picnic spot. The PWD Bungalow located at Naopala, Kolaghat beside the Rupnarayan river was also reserved for the day. It was a beautiful location.

The Journey started at 8:00 in the morning. Breakfast was distributed in packets during the journey by Buses and the Cars. The vehicles reached the Bungalow at 11:00 a.m. Arrangements of Tea and Snacks and Lunch were made and high quality of food were served. A Sports Competition was arranged not only for the children with disabilities but also for the parents of the children, the Teachers, Guests. Everybody participated in this Sports Competition and enjoyed the Events. At the end, Prizes were given away to the Winners. The return journey started at 6:00 P.M. The programme was a grand success. Everybody thanked the Organisers for arranging such an excursion and expressed their happiness for enjoying the day.

On 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, our Students and SAMARTH Residents were invited to visit the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (National Council of Science Museums), Government of India. 20 Students and 5 escorts visited the Museum where the students participated in Quiz Competition, Clay Modelling, Identification of different plants, leaves and fruits by sensing their smell and touching. Certificates were awarded to the participants. The Authorities had provided a Luxury Bus for the up and down journey to our Centre.

### **Adding A New Feather to our Cap :**

The Registration of the land at 18, Ram Road, Sarsuna purchased by Behala Bodhayan was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2008. This was a great achievement and a leap towards fulfillment of the dreams of having our own School Building and Sheltered Workshop.

### **Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the School Building:**

Behala Bodhayan has taken one more bold step. Our dream of building up the necessary infrastructure on our own land rather than depending upon a rented accommodation is nearly coming true. On 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 the Foundation Stone laying ceremony of the School Building on the land at Ram Road, Sarsuna, Kolkata was held at 2-30 p.m.. The foundation stone was laid by General Sankar Roy Choudhury, PVSM , Ex-Chief of the Army Staff and Ex. M.P.(Rajya Sabha). Shri Nirmal Mukherjee, Chairman, Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Dr.Gopal Mitra, the renowned architect, Shri Prabir Roy, President, Living with Dignity Foundation Ltd., USA and many other prominent personalities were present on the occasion and addressed the gathering. Parents, SAMARTH Residents, our students of the Special School, Vocational Unit and other invitees were present in the ceremony. Our students performed music and dance programmes on the stage. The audience highly appreciated their performance.

**Visit by Dignitaries :**

Shri K.K.Roy, Regional Manager, State Bank of India visited our Special School and Residential care Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008. On behalf of National Trust, two officials of an Organisation named Centre for Market Research & Social Development visited Behala Bodhayan on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 to inspect the activities of our SAMARTH Project. They also inspected the houses of the students of 4 Municipal Wards. After an overall inspection, they were overwhelmed by the activities carried on and the quality of services rendered by Behala Bodhayan and expressed their satisfaction. Smt. Supti Sanyal, Executive of Biren Roy Trust visited our Residential Centre and expressed her satisfaction and willingness to extend her helping hand for arranging funds for construction of our new School Building on our own acquired premises. Mr. Prabir Roy, Chartered Accountant and eminent NRI and the President of Living with Dignity Foundation Ltd., USA visited our Special School and the Residential Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2008.

**Organisational Developments :**

The members of the Executive Committee (2007-09) are a set of dedicated parents and are quite active and sincere to their duties. We have always been trying to excel in our activities and bring out the best potentialities of our students.

The Members of the Local Project Committee which was formed as per the Guidelines of the National Trust pay regular visits to our Centre, meet the beneficiaries and help the Organisation to take the beneficiaries for excursion, picnic and weekly outings in and around the city. The suggestions given by the Members of the Local Project Committee from time to time are considered by our Executive Committee and the suggestions are implemented.

Finally, I acknowledge with gratitude the continued guidance our Organisation has been receiving from Professor Ranju Gopal Mukhopadhyay, the Ex.Vice-Chancellor of North Bengal University who has been a source of inspiration to all of us. Our thanks are due to Dr. B.P. Syam Roy, IAS, Shri Deb Kumar Chakravarti, I.A.S., Shri Dibyen Mukherjee, I.A.S., Smt. Bratati Mukherjee, I.R.S., Mr. Prabir Roy, Mr. Shankaracharya Mukhopadhyay, Mr. R.P.Chakravarty for their support and advice. Our sincere thanks are also due to Smt. Gita Bose, Smt. Kumkum Banerjee, Smt. Basanti Rani Dutta Chowdhury, Smt. Aparna Bhattacharya, Smt. Kalpana Chakraborty, Shri Pulak Sen Roy, Prof. A.K.Bhattacharya, Smt. Bhaswati Bhattacharya, Shri Dipak Kumar Dutta Gupta and Shri Sridhar Majumdar whose untiring efforts have made it possible to meet the challenges, the seemingly difficult task of educating and rehabilitating the children with mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities. We also extend our sincere thanks to Dr.Debopriya Mallick, Dr.Shovon Kundu, Dr.Amitabha Roy, Dr.Debojyoti Roy, Dr.Supriyo Roychowdhury and many others.

Before concluding, I should mention about the significant contributions made by our Special Educators, Assistant Teachers, different Therapists, Doctors and the dedicated Staff who have worked together and built up our Institution to a great height. We thank all the parent members, the Honorary Members, the Members of the Advisory Board, the Members of the Executive Committee and Local Project Committee, the donors and innumerable well-wishers and social workers for their support and encouragement to empower and rehabilitate the children with disabilities into the mainstream of the society.