

# SUCHETA KRIPLANISHIKSHA NIKETAN



**A School for the Disabled - Manaklao, India**

**Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan,**

a senior secondary boarding school established in 1991, is home for just over 550 physically challenged children and approximately 50 fully able day scholars. In 2001, 29 girl-students were inducted into Sucheta Kriplani for the first time. Today, this number has risen to 146, with many of them attending school for the first time. Both, boarding and educational facilities are



***Girl students - no longer deprived of an education***

provided free of charge.

Polio is one of the main culprits for the majority of the students' disabilities, but there are a few amputees included as well. School admissions are prioritised on the basis of those who are most severely handicapped, irrespective of their caste and creed. Sucheta Kriplani has 161 students in the 5-10 year age group, 170 in the 11-15

ranges, 161 students form the 15-18 groups and there are 54 students over the age of 18 years.



***New intake of girl students getting to know each other***

In the past, on average, 90% of the Sucheta students have been eligible for university education after passing their final 12<sup>th</sup> Grade exams, but due to a lack of supporting funds, university education has been a distant dream for them. From July 2003, however, every SKSN student will go onto university, thanks to Polio Children's Education Foundation, a charity organisation based in the UK.

Sucheta Kriplani is situated in the rural depths of Western Rajasthan, and on the fringes of the great Thar Desert. It's located



***All 503 of the Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan students!!!!***



***Raj Kanwar, her mother, and her brother are all physically challenged.***



some 28 kms from Jodhpur city, a place known as the 'blue' city of this bone-dry, yet majestic state. Records show that over the last hundred years, seventy of them were plagued with a scarcity of monsoon rains leading to severe droughts and famines. While most of India enjoys an annual monsoon period, this arid zone has to contend with the monsoon rains gracing it with their presence only once every three to four years - a regular pattern in this part of the world.

Most of the SKSN children belong to this very harsh, cruel and inhospitable environment. They come from families who are extremely dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. With the region being highly prone to an erratic and deficit level of rainfall, the farmers can only reap a single, yearly crop - should they be that lucky. This being the case, many of the Sucheta Kriplani students would surely be deprived of an education, if their parents had to pay for the children's education.

Apart from the climatic element, many of the rural schools are located at too great a distance from the disabled child's home. A physically challenged child simply would not be able to endure a walk of 3-8 kilometers, twice a day, and that too, through a very sandy terrain. This is yet another strong reason why they would completely miss out on any kind of an educational life, if they were not at Sucheta Kriplani.



***Every student is urged to become independent and self-sufficient***



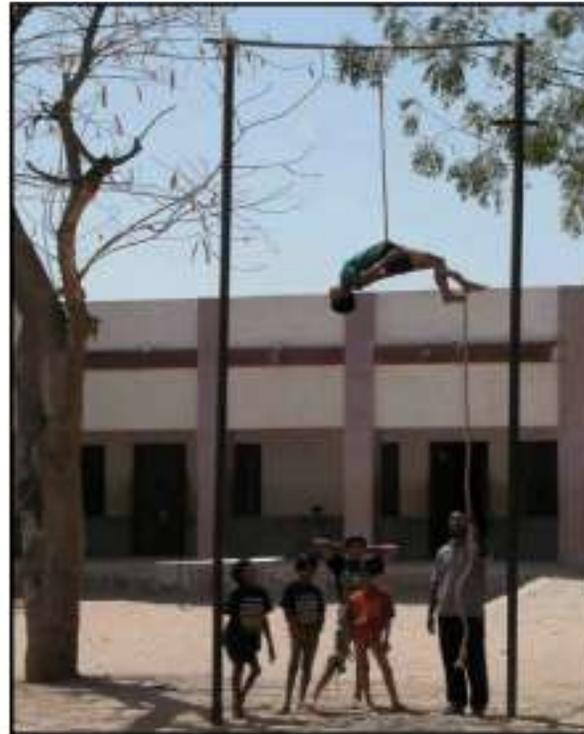
***End of the school day for the Sucheta students!***

to provide every single disabled child from the State of Rajasthan with an education. Hence, the school began its life with about 20 disabled children being taught under a tree.

**Dr Bhairon Singh Bhati**, the eldest son of Dr Manaklao, joined the school as Joint Secretary in 1997 when SKSN was registered as a Trust. Armed with an MA and Ph.D. in Sociology, his dream was to

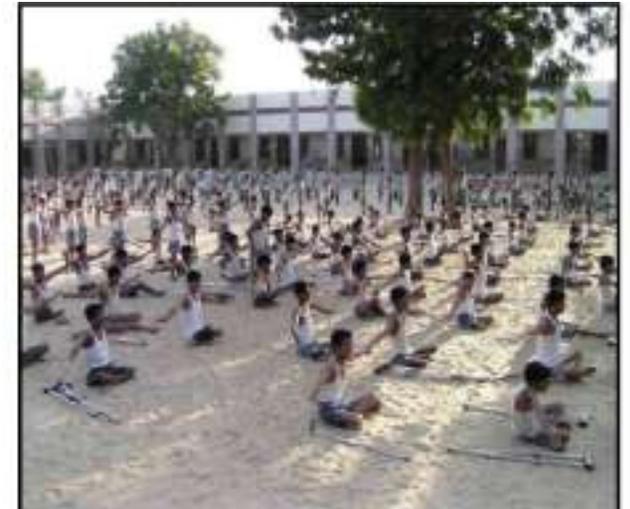
turn these physically challenged children into self-sufficient citizens of the world, who will not be dependent on their families for their livelihoods. And he's doing just that.

The SKSN students follow a normal, countrywide, national education curriculum, with a special emphasis on physical education. This has led the Sucheta children to build up their self-esteem and gain copious amounts of self-confidence.



***Chanchal performing a yogic asana in mid-air by hanging off a Malkam rope***

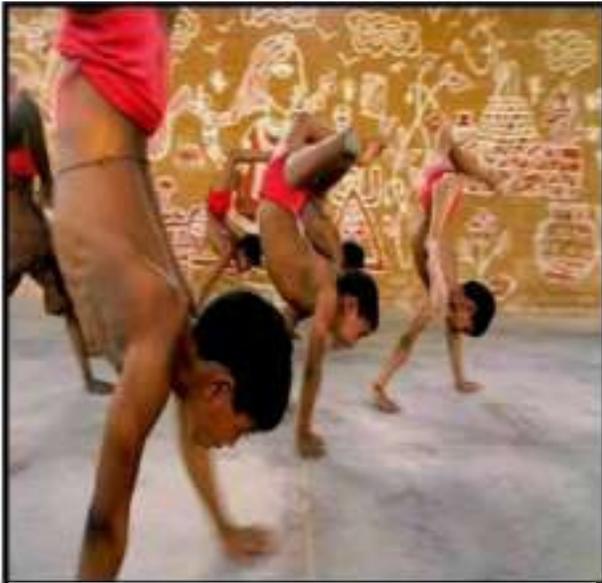
The kids are able to perform yogic asanas while hanging off a 'Malkam rope' from a 25-feet high bar, or from the top of a 13-foot wooden 'Malkam Pole'. Most times, even normal children who are amazed and dazzled by the disabled children's performances are not in a position to compete with the Sucheta students. Similarly, many adult visitors to the school are astonished by their remarkable feats and achievements. It is this form of physical exercise which makes the Sucheta students forget that they are physically challenged in any way whatsoever.



***Physical education is compulsory for all students regardless of their***

At SKSN, we believe that people with disabilities have the right to do whatever it takes to lead a full life - a life that is exciting, fulfilling and complete! Life has to mean

more than just earning, commuting, worrying and yelling! The **'right to leisure'** is as much a fundamental right as the **'right to education'**, if an individual is to achieve his full potential.



**Hand-stand runs for the students during a physical education class.**

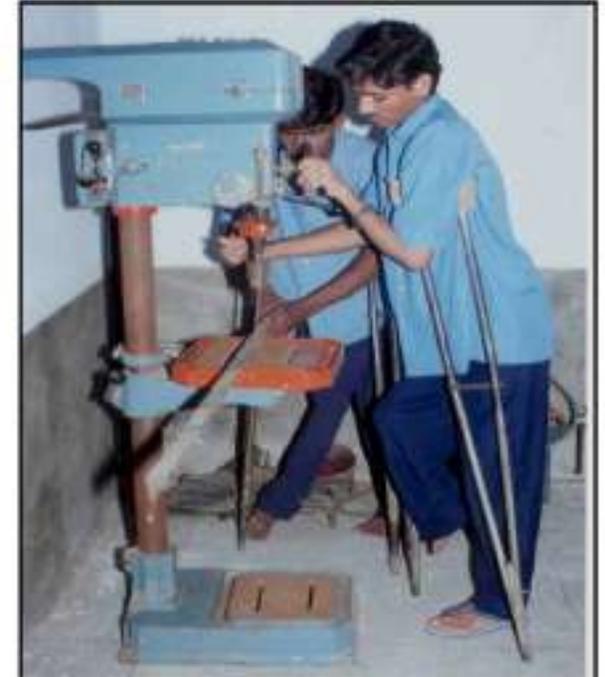
Sports allow individuals to experience the excitement of competition, the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. These experiences help prepare individuals to face the adversity of a disability in their lives and to learn to bounce back in the face of challenge and change. Sports help push the disabled into lives that are motored by ambition and desire, fuelled by discipline, dedication and hard work - qualities needed to survive in a tough world, and particularly, in the harsh



**A disabled student performing an asana from the top of a 'Malkam' pole - a sports speciality from the State of**

desert environment. Sports portray the **'other side'** of the disabled people too...the sunny side, the joys, the aspirations, the

hopes, the talents - some still dormant - the opportunity **'to be'** and not merely **'exist'**.



**Students getting vocational training in metalwork.**

In addition to the requisite three 'Rs', the students are provided with vocational training courses in tailoring, carpentry, and metalwork, to prepare them for adulthood. Some of alumni have gone on to set up their own tailoring shops, and are today, fully supporting themselves.

One of the ex-student's is running a very successful carpentry company in Mumbai, and often drops in to see the younger kids.

Rather touchingly, some of the former students offer to send cash donations to the school, now that they are making small profits with their various businesses! To date, 150 children have passed out of Sucheta Kriplani.



**Leisure activities include chess and farming**



**The dedicated staff of Sucheta Kriplani...and students going through their private study session**



Until now, Sucheta Kriplani students have achieved a 100% pass rate in their final examinations. This is a great achievement on the part of both, the teachers and students, considering that the main criteria for the admission selection is based on the severity of the child's handicap, and not the child's IQ.

The State Government of Rajasthan pays for 80% of the staffs' salaries; with the other 20% having to be raised by SKSN. The Government also provides just over £9.00 a month, per child, for all their meals, electricity, water, clothing & laundry, stationary, and medical expenses, but 10% of this figure has to be covered by SKSN.



**Physically challenged girls tending to the first crop of organically grown**



Items from the kitchen and the living room.



Since this meagre amount of money doesn't stretch very far, SKSN's survival is always dependent on its kind-hearted donors, who have never let the kids down. Our heartfelt thanks go to all those who have been generous with their time and contributions.



#### CONTACT DETAILS

##### **Dr Bhairon Singh Bhati - Secretary**

Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan  
VPO Manaklao  
Via Mathania - Dist. Manaklao  
Jodhpur 342 305  
Rajasthan, India  
Tel: +(91 291) 2553721  
Tel/Fax: +(91 291) 2553717  
Email: [manaklao@sancharnet.in](mailto:manaklao@sancharnet.in)

##### **Sneh Gupta - Executive Director**

Tel: +(91 11) 5163 9050  
Mobile: +(91) 98 100 12275  
Email: [snehprod@vsnl.com](mailto:snehprod@vsnl.com)

#### CHARITY REGISTRATION DETAILS

**Charity Registration No:** 188/JOD/96  
**School Registration No:** 5011/10396 (Awarded by the State Educational Board, Ajmer, Rajasthan)  
**FCRA No:** 125610026 (This registration with the Government of India allows us to receive foreign contributions).