



## **Asha Deep Vidyashram**

(a unit of *Hope & Joy Society for the Underprivileged*)

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### **Introduction**

Asha Deep, a school running under the auspices of the NGO Hope and Joy Society for the Underprivileged, was started in February 2004 with the purpose of providing education to underprivileged children in the city of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The aim of the school is to give children a chance to break free from the cycle of poverty by providing quality education in a loving environment, enabling them to live with dignity and respect. Asha Deep is located in the Nagwa/Samnaghat area of Varanasi (on the bank of Gangaji). The school is run in a rented building with 16 rooms and a playing area. Approximately eighty percent of children belong to parents who are rickshaw-walas and domestic helpers. The rate of alcoholism is high in families of these children.

Asha Deep school is based on the philosophy that:

1. Every child deserves to have a good education
2. A happy place where children enjoy learning should be available
3. Each child should be respected and loved
4. Talents of each child should be recognized and encouraged

Along with academic and basic life skills, Asha Deep promotes self-respect; personal disciplines such as generosity, patience, and perseverance; a sincere desire to treat others with respect and kindness and teaches healthy means of conflict resolution.

### **Number of Children**

With a modest beginning in 2004 with 8 children and one teacher, Asha Deep today has 210 children ranging from the age of 5-18 years and seventeen teachers who, apart from teaching regular academics, look after the mental, physical, emotional and social development of the children in classes from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students who complete 8<sup>th</sup> grade are sent to other schools to continue their studies through 12<sup>th</sup> grade or beyond. At present there are 22 graduates of Asha Deep studying in other local school in classes 9-12<sup>th</sup>. Asha Deep pays all school fees & tuitions for students going to other local school after 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It also supports two of the seven graduates who are currently studying at university level.

