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Humanity Welfare Organization Helpline Kashmir

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Humanity Welfare Organization Helpline (HWOH) is the brainchild of Javed Ahmed Tak, a paraplegic since 1999. Javed was shot in the spine by unidentified gunmen who were trying to persuade him to join their ranks and become a militant. Javed's refusal cost him his ability to walk. He was confined to bed and after major surgery is now able to use a wheelchair.

Javed did not lose faith or hope in himself. To channel his energy, he started teaching orphans of conflict at his home for free. The children later became his networkers and they reached out to the marginalised, destitute and disabled.

In 2005, his small initiative expanded to include basic computer literacy for orphan children and youth. Funded by public donations and social and charity organisations, computers became 'social connectors' and tools of empowerment, especially for young girls. The first batch of girls participated in capacity building workshops organised by Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace. As local partners of WISCOMP's Athwaas initiative, the young girls actively engaged to form Samanbal, grassroots spaces for healing and sharing.

Meanwhile HWOH worked to organise community gatherings to spread awareness of the rights of disabled people. They conducted workshops with teachers, government-run grassroots organisations and involved families and local community about issues related to disability. They received funding from Child Rights and Youth (CRY) to conduct research and to identify children affected by disability, including those who were victims of landmines or weapons. With the help of CRY funds, HWOH now runs a school for 20 disabled children. For Javed and his team,

peace in Kashmir is possible when the rights of all are respected and included. Working under the larger human rights framework, HWOH endeavours to link issues of peace with justice for all.

HWOH is also actively involved in monitoring human rights violations of disabled people.

Individually, Javed has advocating at local and national forms for measures to counter the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This is an area in which he wishes to intervene more actively for peace in Kashmir. The organisation is currently looking for funding to build a barrier free school and to establish a physiotherapy centre for severely disabled people.

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