



Prem Khullar Makes A Difference Among Haryana's Poor

Most of us just talk about doing good. Only a tiny percentage of people actually do something more than talk. So it calls for celebration when once in a blue moon, you meet that one person who is walking the talk. Meet Squadron Leader (Retd.) Prem Khullar, the man behind Able Charities India. This diminutive man with kind eyes has achieved a dream, that unlike in most dreams that mean personal wish fulfilment, but a dream that is keeping hope alive in thousands of poor people in Haryana.



About 62km from Delhi on the Delhi Agra road, in a village called Behrola in Faridabad, you can see the fruits of almost two decades of selfless efforts by Khullar and his team. Called the Able Charitable Hospital, it took shape on the sheer will power of a man who didn't want to spend his life in retired glory. From a couple of rooms in 1993, the hospital today boasts of modern amenities and is spread over 25,000 sq.ft area. Despite this impressive growth, the core ideal that set Prem Khullar on the path to bring suc-



cour and hope to the poor, the widows and children of the area still remains strong. It's still a hospital for the needy, their children and widows.

Khullar who visited the Voice offices on a recent tour of North America took us down the memory lane. "It was 1982, and I had retired from the Indian Air Force. And I wanted to do some farming." But as he came in touch with the local people, he realized that for the local people healthcare was a super luxury. He used to help some of them who came to him by taking them to the distant hospitals. Early 90s, Khullar felt that he needed to do something more to help the people. That's when the idea of setting up a hospital came to him. "Many people were supportive, they offered lands, and money," he says. And what can be called a primary health centre took shape in 1993 that soon became a passable hospital with minimum of staff. And then three years ago, something sad happened that drove Khullar to raise the bar for himself and his charity. "A woman came to us, very ill. We recommended that she be taken to the All India Institute of Medical

Sciences in Delhi because we didn't have the facilities to treat her. Though she had very little money, we helped her get to AIMS. Unfortunately, since her condition was very bad, she passed away. The people from her village began troubling us, they said that since we had taken her to AIMS it was our fault. She had three children who were now without support. They threatened legal action. We said we were ready to go to courts. But I told them to give us the children, we will look after them." That was the beginning of a new era for the local widows and children. Coincidentally, around the same time, there were a couple of widows who they were sheltering. And it was a perfect fit that the children now had support, emotional and otherwise.

It was a brilliant arrangement. It was an unusual beginning. Khullar points out, "With liability of anything from two to five children the widows in Indian society suffer the most. Hence we decided to give them medical help free that is available in Able Hospital by making them temporary members of Able on payment of a nominal fee of Rs 4

for a year."

Starting from 8 children in 1998 to 29 children in 2005, the hospital today is able to provide medical and educational aid to 200 children. There is comprehensive medical cover to these children and total education cover in the best schools in the area. Out of the 200 children covered, 10 are orphans. Also 500 widows have registered for medical cover so far. But Khullar is far from satisfied. He is looking to take on the big challenge. "We dream of a day when we can cover 4000 widows." That's how many there are in the 200 villages Able Charities serve. Further down the road, he has plans to set up a Heart and Paediatric Hospital to address one of the major health issues faced by India's poor. 3,00,000 children are born annually with congenital heart defects.

To realize the dreams on behalf of those most needy, Khullar travels the world with this message to contribute in any capacity to Able Charities. He acknowledges the thousands of well-wishers who have contributed to allow Able to come this far. And he is seeking once again the help of those healthy and well-to-do in India and abroad so that they can make a huge difference, in many cases life and death difference, in the lives of so many children and widows.

Able Charities is duly registered with Revenue Canada. You can reach the local offices of Able Charities at 416 476 1652 or 905 901 2780.