

SRI RAM GOBURDHUN CHARITABLE TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT 2003- 2004

DATA SHEET

Name of the organisation : **SRI RAM GOBURDHUN CHARITABLE TRUST**
Name of Project : **Project WHY**
Registration Number: **S 32978**
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Income Tax Exemption: **2001-2002/S-2576/99/241, dated 28th May 2002)**
FCRA Number: **231660437**

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Account (Indian Rupees) ; **No 0509927-227**
Account (Foreign Currency) **No 0509991-227**

Director's Message

The past year has been extremely rewarding for all of us at project WHY. Once again the children proved that they were more than worthy of the trust we reposed in them.

But the past year will be remembered for the heart wrenching human stories that came our way: from the terrible loss of two children, to our little fish curry boy, from Raju's heart to Babloo's worm infested body, from the terrible plight of three children who lost their mother, to the predicament of a teen aged mother and her still born dead child. And as the year ends, a mother fights for life, while her mentally challenged child unconsciously prays for a miracle.

These human stories were challenges that project WHY faced with dignity and overcame. They were lessons in life. They were eye openers about social iniquities we are not even aware of. They were reminders of how much one could achieve if one wanted to. But that was not all. What they really proved, was that there was still good left in human beings, that all one had to do was seek it. And with each one of them, project WHY became so much richer, in friends, in experience but above all in love.

The past year was also the one when from project WHY we became planet WHY. With each passing day, there were new demands, new challenges and we accepted them all. If teachers were needed, they were found in the nearby lanes and bye lanes; if space became scarce, some corner was cleaned, an awning put up and thus a class created. We soon became a portable planet, one that would be set up every morning, according to the needs, the weather, the mood, and then shut away every evening in a box till the next day. And thus from 500 we grew to 600.

Slowly we also began solving problems, easing pain, fighting for rights. And even if we did not succeed each time, a step was taken in the right direction.

As we look back, we see that our goals were again reached. Though the secondary school exams were postponed this year, our primary school results touched 100% and our dream of containing drop out rates seemed closer to being fulfilled.

So this year project WHY gifted us planet WHY

A strange but beautiful land that brings together different parts of India, different social and economic strata of society, different forms of worship and faith under one invisible roof, big enough to hold everyone together. Often ties and bond are strengthened by sharing pain and anguish; problems bring us close, and solutions are found together;

moments of sorrow are shared as well as times of joy. And each day our little planet grows... and even entered the cyberWorld with the launch of our website!

It has been a miracle... and we feel blessed.

Anuradha Goburdhun Bakhshi
April 2004

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The year saw our education programme continue in what has by now become a well-set model. Our children once again performed extremely well, and our programme remained dynamic and flexible, something that we feel is in great part the reason of the success of our work.

In spite of limited funds, extreme paucity of space and often time, we were aware of the necessity of going beyond curriculum study, and incorporated in every manner possible life skills into our day to day activities.

This year also saw us take a big step towards sustainability with the parents association formally deciding to institute a financial participation by the parents, and the launch of specific projects aimed at generating sustainable funding in the next two years.

THE APPROACH

For our entire education programme our approach remained the same: a judicious combination of education and life skill activities.

For our sustainability programme we again adopted the approach that characterises the work of project WHY: active participation of the community at all levels; options were discussed at length and suggestions incorporated in our planning: the model reached took into account all social and human realities.

DETAILED ACTIVITIES

Educational Activities

Overall Situation - infrastructure

As we begun the year, the basti vikas kendra being constructed in the park which had housed our activities and from which we had been evicted had reached completion. And even though it had been promised to us, and we had put in all the papers required, the building still lies empty and we continue to hold classes in ad hoc spaces.

After spending invaluable time trying to get the building, we decided to let matters stand and to continue teaching in whatever space available.

This year, we took three more rooms on rent, held classes on an open terrace, weather permitting, and in small open spaces available.

Early this year, we started primary classes in two new places. In Shiv Mandir camp classes are held in a small room and in Janta Jivan camp, we erected a platform and hold classes under a thatched roof.

Overall situation -staff

The year saw some teachers leave us. With the increase of students we took on four new teachers. once Afghani the selection was from within the community. We also engaged a visually impaired teacher from Braille classes for our two visually impaired students.

At the close of the year our staff strength reached 41.

Overall situation - content

The emphasis of our teaching programme was on developing the ability of children to handle their studies as independently as possible. However, we were often handicapped by the fact that a lot of time had to be spent on completing school curriculum and preparing for school examinations.

Curriculum Support

Driven by the dual objective of containing and arresting school drop out rates and enhancing performance, our main stress was on our curriculum support programme. As in the past, the programme was flexible and adapted to the specific needs of the students.

primary school intervention

Our target being to contain drop out rates, the curriculum support programme was designed keeping in mind the specific needs of each child. Once again, the first task was to make the child get a positive image of her/himself and then to lead the child on to the specific need of the class in question. the results was extremely positive as this year all the children passed their end year examinations and got promoted in the next class.

secondary school intervention

once again our objective was to enhance performance and hence, though adequate space was given to the two dreaded subjects namely maths and English, other subjects were also taught extensively. Self-study techniques were also imparted as well as confidence building techniques. We are sure that the results will vindicate our approach.

lobar intervention programme

the lobar intervention programme continued with its three activities, an early education programme for around 18 children, a conventional school support programme and a programme for young adults willing to validate their studies through the Open School. The results have been satisfactory.

early intervention programme

our early intervention programme has been a great success. this is shown by the number of children on our waiting lists. this year the programme has been structures and

the children divided into 3 groups. Structure pre school skills have been introduced as well as a variety of play techniques and creative pursuits. the children have shown enormous progress.

intervention for children with special needs.

here again we have achieved great success. our programme aims at making these children as independent as possible is showing promising results. moreover the children and young adults have synergised into a positive energetic group where each one has bonded with the other despite of varying disabilities. they are taught day-to-day living skills as well as non-formal education. cooking, shopping and even beauty culture for the girls have proved to be a great favourites.

the vocational workshop has also evolved with new skills being introduced: stitching, paper bag making and beadwork have been good options.

Other activities

Life skills and problem solving

Life skills is according to us an intrinsic part of any self respecting education intervention programme. At project WHY we strive to help children understand themselves. Our approach is again flexible. Individual counseling, dealing with violence at home and in the school, learning to understand others are some of the areas covered. The life skill programme is part of our main intervention as shortage of funds did not allow us to have a specific programme.

CyberWHY

cyberWHY as we like to call our computer awareness programme remains very popular. Unfortunately we were not able to get any new computers and thus the time given per child was extremely limited.

We however ensure that our special section get access to computer time as it was felt that this was something that had been an extremely positive.

As we have to hearing impaired children, we are exploring the possibility of getting some special software to enable them to access the cyberworld.

We are also looking at the possibility of getting some income from classes for the local youth after school hours and on week ends. This would help us sustain the computer centre.

Nutrition

The leap in the number of students and the extreme paucity of funds once again did not permit the resumption of our nutrition programmes.

However we did provide nutrition in cases where we felt it was required: under nourished children, pregnant women etc...

Recreational activities

Once again it was not possible to do as much as we would have liked. Outings were limited to the early education programme children and the special children. The smaller ones were taken to the children's park and the special kids spent a day at Dilli Haath. Unfortunately this year our sports activities were extremely limited and we were not able to have our yearly sports day.

Drawing remained an important part of the curriculum though dance and theatre took a back seat because of the non availability of space. This is something that has to be looked into.

Events

Here again, we could not have our Annual day because of shortage of funds. A painting competition was however organised on the birthday of little Rohan, one of the children murdered on April 12th 2004.

Crisis Intervention

This past year will be remembered for the emergency situations in which we had to intervene, and it goes to the credit of project WHY, that in each case we were able to achieve results.

Rohan and Puja

The year started with the dastardly murder of two beautiful innocent souls. Project WHY fought hard to ensure that a case under section 306 was registered and that the police continue to look for the perpetrators of such a heinous crime. In a city where children are unsafe, it becomes important to fight for the rights of children as an unsafe environment automatically leads to children being kept away from schools. Till date the case has not been solved.

Utpal

Utpal who fell into a billing pot in march 2003 was written off as a gone case by the hospital authorities. project WHY decided Utpal would live and we fought to save this beautiful child.

Utpal still needs skin grafting to be able to live a quality life and we are exploring various options, but today he is a bonny boy, who has won over every heart that he has come across

Raju

Raju's father Sitaram came to project WHY in may 2003, seeking financial help to get his son's open heart surgery. He had sold everything he had , been everywhere he could go and yet and only collected a mere 15% of the sum needed.

We appealed for help to NDTV who aired raju's story and we were overwhelmed by the number of people who came to our help. Raju was operated upon on September 22nd 2004 and had today gone back to school.

Sitaram is now a great supporter of project WHY!

Babloo

We found Babloo, a 22 year old slightly deranged young man, lying in pain, his body infested with maggots near the centre one day in November 2003. We took him to AIMS where with a little persuasion the doctors agreed to tend to him. Babloo was then taken to a night shelter and after a few days he was shifted to St Stephen's hospital where his wounds were healed. He was then taken to an institution and was later sent back to his family in Bihar.

Jhunoo

Jhunoo Utpal's' mom, was diagnosed with a tumour and again it began imperative to save her. She was operated upon in January 2004, and has recovered.

A mother's wish

On January 27, 2004 we were shocked to hear of the plight of a young mother who had delivered a still born baby, alone in a hospital bed. The hospital authorities wanted to throw the child in the dustbin. The mother wanted a decent burial for what was to her baby.

We buried the child.

Kusum, Moti and Arati

We were appalled to find young Moti frozen to his bones one morning in January 2004. We soon discovered that he had two siblings and that their mother was dead. The father a truck driver was an alcoholic and an abusive father. The children now come to project WHY and are looked after by us. We hope to get them admitted to a residential school next year.

Bimla

Bimla has 2 children, one of them Sapna is mentally and physically challenged. Bimla suffered from a prolapsed uterus and lived in difficult conditions. When we got Bimla checked up, we were shocked to find that she had a bad heart and thus needed to be operated upon.

She is to be operated upon soon.

All the above stories brought us face to face with many situations that we did not know existed. They helped us understand many realities with greater compassion. They made us realise what we were capable of and made us walk that extra mile.

These human experiences showed us that to make a real difference, we had to understand the social environment people lived in and above all incorporate these in our work.

It also made us painfully aware of the plight of the Indian woman and of the necessity to empower her.

But above all they made us aware of all the goodwill that existed around us, and also of the role project WHY could play in helping individuals in distress.

This also vindicated our view that funds for social causes should be flexible, as such interventions go a long way in helping us become agents of social transformation.

Networking and Advocacy

This year again it was our endeavour to try and extend our interaction with other organisations.

Close interaction was continued with UNESCO Paris and useful exchange of information achieved.

Our interaction with YOUTHREACH was also continued and resulted in our participating a candle making workshop. A paper bag making workshop was also organised at the Project WHY with Dev.

We established contact with SMILE, a networking organisation and two of our teachers attended a crafts workshop organised by them.

The Inner Wheel Clubs of Delhi celebrated teacher's day at project WHY and we now have a regular link with some of their chapters.

However we also added a new dimension to our network by linking with PARIVARTAN. This was done because we felt that community empowerment had a key role to play in any sustainable social change programme.

PARIVARTAN held a workshop with parents and community members and introduced us all to the Right to Information Act.

Our battle for the relocation of the Lohar community of delhi continued with the petition spearheaded by us being admitted in the High Court on May, 9th 2003 . Till date there have been 4 hearings of the case.

We hope that a just decision will soon be given.

SUSTAINABILITY

But the past year will be remembered in the annals of project WHY, as the year of sustainability.

What had begun in 2002 saw its coming of age in 2003.

We have always been aware that the project WHY model has no real value unless it was unless a valid and workable sustainability model was dovetailed into it.

Empowering parents to play an active role in the education of their children, becomes futile if they have to remain dependant on an outside agency to do so. So an income generation module had to be evolved, tried and incorporated into our overall approach.

The first option was of course a participation by the parents. This has been started the previous year and saw its actualisation in 2003. The parents associations itself decided the fee structure which ranged from rs 50 to 150 a month. It was of course decided that sponsors would be found for the needy children as no child would be kept away.

the parents' participation is working but only brings in 10% of the required amount. Other sources of income had to be found.

This has become the next objective of project WHY, one that we will address in the coming year.

AFTER WHY WE ASK WHAT

There was another problem that has been intuitively felt at initial stages but was becoming more and more apparent as we moved on. The question of the future of the urban slum child.

We soon realised that even with our best efforts the urban slum child could not reach the marks that his peers from privileged homes were achieving, and hence many doors would still remain closed to them.

In many cases, the education they were getting would not allow them to better their employment options.

A solution had to be found.

When we opened our centre, our aim was to ensure that slum children get a better chance in life. Our education intervention has been a success as shown by our results, but at project WHY we feel that we are not at the end of the road.

The question that has to be asked is what is the future of these 1,7 million children in Delhi, what are the avenues opened to them. And we are compelled to concede that even with our best efforts, slum children cannot reach the norms required by the present employment scenario. We had to seek new avenues and maybe even start looking beyond the city

Project RETURN

A chance encounter brings to us the world of bio diesels, which could become an easy source of energy , and thus leads us to launch project Return where RETURN stands for renewable Energies for Urban Rural networks. Our aim is to promote a new broad based income generation activity and spearhead a possible return to the habitat of origin where new avenues of employment can be created

Today project RETURN is running a series of pilot projects both in the urban and rural context, which will, we hope, help us formulate correct strategies for the future.

On July 31st, project WHY organised an interesting meet entitled Vriksh Se Diesel Tak, where Professor Shrinivasa from IISc Bangalore interacted with over 100 slum dwellers and introduced them to the possibilities of bio diesel.

The response was extremely positive.

Return to nature

We also launched Return to Nature, where a wide range of nature based products are being developed and test marketed. These include natural soaps, organic food and other products, We are looking for markets and hope that these products will create the network we need to gain funds for running our educational activities in the future.

Project WHY on the net

Last year also saw the launch of our website. www.projectwhy.org . The site is maintained in-house, and allows us to share our day-to-day achievements with the outside world.

we thank Ashok Varma for having designed the first site.

Today the site is maintained in-house, and we hope one day to be able to take web creation and maintenance as a sustainability activity.

www.projectwhy.org is a well visited site and has brought us support from the world over.

Lessons learnt

This year brought to the fore many new experiences and many valuable lessons learnt. Whereas our broad based approach to education support was once again vindicated, the issue that arose and led to many additions in our approach was that of the future of the children we were educating. We realised that they would never be able to come to the level of their peers from privileged homes, and that the employment options available to them were restricted.

It thus became imperative to explore new avenues and even start thinking of a return to the habitat of origin.

With the present slum relocation policy, urban life will lose the initial attraction it may have had and thus it was time to start planning options away from cities.

We also realised that illiterate parents were willing to pool their resources but that it was imperative to have a well planned and working sustainability option within the module we proposed.

Finally we were made aware that to be successful, any programme had to build within it a social awareness programme. Women empowerment was also central to any successful child oriented programme. Hence it was decided to look into the possibilities of starting SHGs and other income generating issues. Civic rights was also an essential element to any social transformation effort. We decided to increase our networking with organisations working in this field.

All in all, the focal point that came to light was the need to broaden our outreach.

Funding

This year again, funding was a constant issue that required a lot of time and effort. We were made painfully aware of the fact that not having funds for a sustained period was hindering a lot of work.

Though we managed to scrape through, it was always a race against time!

The year started with a crisis that was overcome by our organising two fund raising events thanks to our friends who once again came to our help.

We are thankful to Ana Grenfell for having organised an Evening in Dublin in April 2003, and Pierre Jochem of the Imperial Hotel for the summer ball held in May 2003. This helped us to raise about 5 lacs, which saw us through the first part of the year, the NDTV grant came to our rescue in November 2003.

The Irish Embassy accepted to fund part of our activities, but the funds could not be acceded to as we did not yet have our FCRA.

Many friends helped us with small regular donations and in February a desperate appeal on the net, brought us into contact with many new friends.

We also decided to start a page on our site, which would reflect the financial situation of project WHY on a day-to-day basis: www.projectwhy.org/expenses.asp

We also received contributions in kind:
blankets and sweaters from Jon Lea
Mats and fans from Pam Hudson
Swings, racks, tables and chairs from the French school
Sweaters and stationery from the DCWA
Sweaters and stationery from Inner Wheel ladies
Clothes, toys, school bags from Enfances Indiennes

Guest and visitors

We had a number of visitors this year and many became friends of project WHY and great supporters:

Professor Udipi Shrinivasa and Nayeem from IISc Bangalore
D V Sridharan publisher goodnewsindia.com
Govind Rao and Maru Bai from Adilabad
Ritu Thakore
Pam Hudson
Fatima
Jon Lea from the America school
Lalita Kapoor and the Ladies of the Inner Wheel Clubs
Shashi Gupta and the DCWA Ladies
Xavier Ray and Enfances Indiennes
Rita Anand Editor Civil Society
Anima Jain from Indian NGOs.com
Lavina from Western University

R P Singh Zee Tv
The Sahara samay team
The ankhon dekhi team
and many others.

Volunteers

Many volunteers came to help project WHY this year:

Maya from the USA
Hugo and Marlene from France
Clara from Spain
Ashima
Clarisse
Mylene
Gaelle

Press

This year Project WHY came of age and was written about in many newspapers, periodicals and made its debut on the box. We were featured in:

Times of India
Rashtriya Sahara
Asian Age
Economic Times
Pioneer
Goodnewsindia.com
Indiangos.com
pehal on zee TV
Sahara same
ankhon dekhi on DD News

To all who helped, and stood by us we would like to say: Thank You

