

As another year goes by, we are proud to share with you our achievements and plans for the year to come.

Saikripa, a voluntary Non-Government Organisation came into 'existence in NOIDA in 1989 on seeing the plight of the children who are mercilessly abandoned, neglected, mistakenly lost and who have no one else to get support from. A project, which began as a home for children, evolved into a holistic development programme involving broadly their home, education and livelihood.

I HOME - BAL KUTIR

Home is where there is no fear. Hence Bal Kutir was started in Feb'90 for these demoralised children to create confidence in them with the security of shelter, food, healthcare and above all the warmth. The strength of the children is now 28 consisting 12 boys and 16 girls. Yashoda and Kavita aged 7 and 5 years who joined during 1999-2000 are progressing well in the pre-primary section of Sai Shiksha Sansthan. A new born baby girl has been admitted during Nov' 2000 and the girl has been named Radhika. The baby is progressing well in her growth.

Shreya and Raju who passed out from Sai Shiksha Sansthan are doing well in their studies in 11th Std. at Rockwood Public School. Rajat's progress in carpentry work at home is good and continues his attendance in the special school Innocent hearts school. Deepak, the handicapped boy continues to attend the training course in Electrical work at the vocational training centre at Delhi Brotherhood Society Tahirpur, Delhi. Meera, the handicapped girl, who was earlier working in the garment factory has been provided with a PCO instrument and is running a booth for PCO/STD in Sector 34 NOIDA from Jan' 01. Other children are pursuing their formal education and are in good cheers.

Excursions and outings

During the second quarter children were taken to the Museum of modern Art which they enjoyed very much. They were also taken to see the drama 'SCIENCE KI KHOJ' which was quite informative. During the third quarter the children were taken to the magic show by the world famous magician PC SORCOR (JR) at NOIDA and the children thoroughly enjoyed the show. During the last quarter they were taken to a park for an outing.

II Education

- a. **Sai Shiksha Sansthan - Report attached separately.**
- b. **Sai Vidya Vatika**

Child labour has become an issue of much debate and discussion over the years. While many strongly believe that all forms of child labour is absolutely wrong, there are those who would argue that it is sometimes a necessity. They feel that child labourers bring in much needed income and that when a family is struggling to make ends meet each day, reading, writing and arithmetic will bring little comfort.

But the development of the child, the family and India as a nation is hindered by child labour. Children are growing up illiterate and ignorant because they are working instead of going to school. The cycle of poverty widens and the struggle continues.

Saikripa recognises that an integrated approach is required to tackle this issue. Therefore Saikripa launched Sai Vidya Vatika in Nov' 90. The programme aims to reduce the number of children engaged in exploitative and hazardous labour and improve the living conditions. An education centre Sai Vidya Vatika was started at Shirdi Sai Samit at Sector 40, NOIDA. The samiti authorities were kind enough to provide some space in the Sai Temple Complex for this purpose. This project did have some teething problems. The initiative would not have been successful had the children not been enthusiastic to study. They enrolled themselves and later brought their parents to talk to us. At present the school has a strength of about 100 children. Part of this strength attend the school in the morning session at Sai Mandir and the rest of the strength attend the school in the afternoon session at Khaitan Public School, Sector 40 NOIDA. The Khaitan Public School authorities have been kind enough to permit us to utilise the existing infrastructural facilities of the school from Aug. 2000. Sai Vidya Vatika also provides mid day meals to the child. This step has encouraged the children to attend the school without break and also to increase the strength. The results achieved in Sai Vidya Vatika for providing preprimary and non-formal education to children to prepare them for enrolment in formal schools have been quite satisfactory. This could be seen from a case history given below.

Pooja, a girl aged ten years was born among six sisters and two brothers. Her father is working as an electrician on a casual basis without any permanent income Pooja's mother is illiterate and is only a housewife. They are living in the vicinity of Sai Mandir located at Sector 40, NOIDA. Pooja used to loiter with unkempt hair and dressed in dirty and torn dresses around the temple in the expectation of getting some eatables from the temple before the time the Sai Vidya Vatika was started.

Pooja was since taken into Sai Vidya Vatika and was given informal education alongwith midday meal. Since then she has been taking lot of interest in the activities of Sai Vidya Vatika and has been coming up brightly. Today she is one of the best students in Sai Vidya Vatika scoring more than sixty per cent on an average in all the subjects in class III. Pooja is ambitious of becoming a school teacher. Her father Mr. Sochan and mother Mrs. Membathy are also very keen that their daughter studies well and come up in life to a good status.

Just one year in Sai Vidya Vatika has made a lot of difference in the personality of Pooja and is destined to become 'something' in life provided proper support is given.

III Livelihood

Income Generation Programme

The greeting cards, terracota artefacts and candles made by Bal Kutir children were put up for sale during Durga Pooja festival at Kali Bari, NOIDA, Diwali Mela at Vishwa Bharati School, NOIDA and at Mayur Vihar Phase II. These items were seen and appreciated for their beauty and skill by the public and some of the goods were purchased by people.

There was a presentation of child Art Exhibition at Art Today Gallery. I Hamilton House, Cannought Place, New Delhi on 8th & 9th Dec. by Concern India Foundation. Paintings created by the children of Balkutir were sold for a good price.

Constraints due to paucity of funds

- a. We have been trying to acquire a new bus for Balkutir since the existing vehicle is more than ten years old and unfit for plying in Delhi area as per the new regulations enforced by the Delhi Govt. for pollution control.
- b. Acquisition of land is other immediate requirement for constructing our own school building to get the CBSE recognition for Sai Shiksha Sansthan.
- c. The six units of Low Income Group accommodation hired for Saikripa / Bal Kutir at Sector 12 NOIDA is gradually becoming uninhabitable needing regular maintenance. It is proposed to acquire these houses from the NOIDA authorities and make additions and alterations in the structure to make it more conducive for living.

CONCLUSION

While there is much to celebrate, we also know that the problems / constraints are far from solved. Our commitment to education are never matched by funds.

Amidst all the hurdles we are optimistic and energetic. Optimism is the fuel that drives any dream or aspiration and we guess that is how we have been managing to survive from day one. We have been able to do all this work only because of constant support from CRY, Concern India Foundation, Hindustan Perot System, Asha (Arizona), generous contributions from American Express, Cadence, HUDCO and many other individuals / institutions.