Women SHG members from RGF's project in Jamwa Ramgarh interacting with other SHG members during an exposure visit to Alwar

Foreword

This report marks the completion by the Foundation of its first 15 years. During this period, it has rendered yeoman service to our society in its chosen fields of endeavour, blazing a trail in some areas, filling critical gaps in others, and generally giving added strength to our vibrant voluntary sector.

There is much to celebrate. Working towards the goal of universal literacy, our 1411 village and slum libraries are not only helping to inculcate a reading habit among adults and children, but also contributing to improving the quality of learning in schools. In its pioneering programme for the welfare and education of children orphaned by terrorism in different parts of the country, the Foundation has given its heart to healing the wounds and minds of these innocent victims of senseless violence. In a further ground-breaking initiative last year, the Foundation launched a programme to assist and rehabilitate civilians who sustain but survive horrific injuries from uncleared landmines in some of our border areas.

These are but a few instances of the Foundation's wide-ranging activities to empower women and children, encourage water conservation and rainwater harvesting, help the disabled, improve education and health care and, more generally, extend a caring hand to some of the most deprived and marginalized sections of our people.

It is not just what the Foundation does, but how it does it that counts. It has marshalled its scarce resources and used them to achieve outcomes of high quality. As this report shows, much can be achieved even with relatively small sums of money. I need hardly say that the Foundation's work also gives me much personal satisfaction, because it provides an opportunity to associate myself directly with some of Rajivji's deeply-felt concerns.

Although much has been achieved, the Foundation cannot rest on its laurels. I hope it will attract even greater public support to enable it to give comfort, solace and hope to many more.

I warmly thank our Board of Trustees and our donors and well-wishers. I congratulate our Secretary-General and the Foundation's staff for all that they have done with such commendable results.

SONIA GANDHI
Chairperson