

RAJIV GANDHI FOUNDATION

Our Mission

The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation is inspired by the vision of a nation that is modern, an economy that is strong and a society that is just. It seeks to strengthen civil society's contribution to the realization of these objectives.

The Foundation is independent of party or political affiliation and offers a forum for dialogue between different views. It works towards influencing public policy, improving governance – local, national and international – and providing enlarged opportunities to the underprivileged and the deprived.

In promoting human development in its diverse aspects, the Foundation gives particular attention to supporting diversity and pluralism in human societies, the empowerment of women and the alleviation of poverty. Acknowledging our obligation to future generations, the Foundation also works for the regeneration of India's environment and the protection of our country's biodiversity.

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As on 31 March 2008

RGF MANAGEMENT

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees met on 6th March 2008 to review the Foundation's work and provide appropriate guidance.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on 5th July 2007 and 27th February 2008 to consider individual proposals and various administrative and financial matters.

No member of the Board or Council receives any remuneration.



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Foreword

The publication of the annual report is an occasion to celebrate what has been achieved and to take stock of where we stand and how we want to proceed.

The year saw much activity at the Foundation and its numerous partners. The library project continued to grow with many new partners and 53 new libraries. The libraries also had a large number of new activities organised for both the children and the larger village community. The year witnessed many of these libraries emerge as a cultural hub of the villages where they are located. To promote retention of girls in school, a significant new programme was added this year for girls from Dalit and Muslim communities. A generous grant from the SSN Trust allowed us to give scholarship of Rs 500 per month to 1440 class 6 and class 9 girls for studies up to class 10. On another note, the Foundation continued to spread good cheer through the parched villages of Rajasthan by constructing 56 water harvesting structures and organizing numerous capacity building activities for the Panchayat functionaries and other local leaders. The livelihood options of the marginalized women of Baiga community in Chhattisgarh and Musahar community in Bihar were sought to be expanded through self help groups. The distribution of Motorized Triwheelers reached another 150 disabled men and women this year to help them pursue educational, employment or business opportunities. Along the lines of the Lifeline Express which we support, a new train Red Ribbon Express was launched to provide support for AIDS victims and spread information about the disease. The RGICS research and advocacy activities continued to attract attention and young Cambridge Scholars supported by the Foundation continued to make progress.

These are just a few of the many programmes and activities that were organised during the year. At an individual level, they offered succour to a large number of people in ways that will transform their lives. Yet, relative to the magnitude of the task before the country, the impact that we could make was naturally only modest. Our strategy of providing grant support to a diverse set of NGOs for a whole range of activities has helped fill a critical need in the voluntary sector. It is however fair to ask if we should continue with this strategy now when there are many more donors than there were 16 years ago when we decided on this strategy. In particular, would it be a good idea to focus our efforts and resources on one or two functional areas? The year-end marked the beginning of a conversation on this subject which is vital to the way we envisage the future of the Foundation.

It has always given me particular pleasure to associate myself with the work of the Foundation. I deeply appreciate the support of the Board of Trustees, the donors and our well wishers. I congratulate the Foundation staff for all the good work done during the year.



SONIA GANDHI
Chairperson

Overview

This year while many of our existing programmes and partnerships continued, some important new beginnings were made. Let me begin with the new ones.

Vidya Gyan Scholarships

It is not uncommon to hear about bright young girls not being able to continue their studies because of social prejudices or economic hardships. In such circumstances, sometimes a scholarship can work magically for them. It can meet costs related to their education and earn them a much deserved respect from the family and the community. This year the Foundation was able to start a new scholarship programme for girls from Dalit and Muslim communities of three districts of Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi, Rae Bareilly and Barabanki. This programme was made possible by a generous grant from SSN Trust. 1440 girls from 6th and 9th class were selected on the basis of their academic performance for a support of Rs 500 per month up to class 10. Further academic assistance is being provided through coaching classes which specially focus on English and Mathematics. Skills of the senior girls are being upgraded through computer and vocational skill trainings being organised under the programme.

Red Ribbon Express

The idea of using trains to take medical facilities to remote areas was pioneered by Lifeline Express. Over the years, it has helped thousands of disabled persons

receive high quality surgical treatment right at their door step. The Foundation continued its support for Lifeline express this year too. We went a step further. We extended this concept to an entirely new area: support for AIDS victims and spreading awareness of the disease. This was done through the launch of the Red Ribbon Express. This seven-coach train has especially designed bogies that serve as education and exhibition centre, auditorium and training centre and counselling and medical services centre. The project was made possible through the support, inter alia, of Indian Railways and NACO. It has already attracted 3.5 lakh people in 54 stations that it touched in the first three months of its operation.

Natural Resource Management

Natural Resource Management activities in Rajasthan are, unlike most of our other programmes, run directly by us with our own staff and our own volunteers. Since its inception, the programme has grown from strength to strength. This year 56 new water harvesting structures were constructed. In matters of location choice, financing, maintenance and distribution of benefits, village level institutions created and/or strengthened by the Foundation continued to be the most important voices. This year we identified a new area for our

operation; Rahir watershed of about 600 hectares in the neighbourhood of the location of our current activities. The initial topographical survey and community mobilisation tasks have been undertaken.

Libraries

The libraries continue to be among the most important activities of the Foundation. The geographical spread of these libraries extended this year with the opening of 53 new libraries. We made special effort to add life to our libraries.

We made special effort this year to add life to our libraries. Thus, a large number of interesting activities were organised for children, teachers and the village community in general.

Thus, a large number of interesting activities were organised for children, teachers and the village communities in general. These activities included workshop on rural journalism, rocketry workshop for children, meeting of women's groups on maternal health issues, science model preparation workshop etc.

Kashmir Initiative

One of the more colourful functions of the Foundation during the year was organised in Srinagar. About 5000 students from all over the Kashmir valley enjoyed a unique film festival especially meant for them and savoured such cinematic productions as *Iqbal*, *The Jungle Book*, *Oliver Twist*, *Children of Heaven* and *Happy Feet*. The community library in Srinagar continued to be an

important part of the lives of its regular visitors. The effort to discover literary talent and create books for children bore results as 9 manuscripts were shortlisted by National Book Trust for publication from the 60 that were developed through our various initiatives. Draft of a teaching manual "Discovering Kashmir"

distribution of Motorised Triwheelers, provision of Jaipur Foot, education for Muslim girls in Hyderabad and Mumbai, formation of self help groups for, inter alia, Baiga women in Chhattisgarh and Musahar women in Bihar, Scholarships for children affected by terrorism and tsunami and a lot more.

However, even as we have been doing all this, the depth and size of the voluntary sector has changed significantly since 1991. There are now many institutions that perform the role that we have been playing. Should we therefore not revisit our strategy, now that the times have changed? Would a contraction of functional spread



was prepared and pilot tested among some of the children who were part of the original workshops that led to creation of the manual. The manual which is meant for middle school children seeks to help them explore Kashmir through its languages, lifestyle, culture, arts & crafts, built heritage, and natural environment.

This is but a brief introduction to a small sample of our activities this year. The rest of the report paints the full picture. That picture is actually a collage of a diverse set of activities ranging from

Future

The debate within the Foundation about its future gathered momentum towards the end of the year. Over the last 16 years or so of our existence, we have largely been a grant giving agency. The functional spread of our grants has mirrored the diversity of India's needs and that of the voluntary sector's activities. It has served smaller NGOs that cannot access large donor organizations particularly well. We have successfully spawned many new initiatives and catalyzed many interesting innovations over a wide spectrum of functional areas.

but continuation of all-India geographical coverage be the answer? Should the Foundation continue to work largely through other NGOs or should it learn from its successful experience in Rajasthan and build the requisite capacity to intervene directly? These and many other such questions were being raised at the close of the year. We seem poised for a change of direction.

Gyanendra Badgaiyan
Secretary

Natural Resource Management

Programme vision

Our programmes aim to:

- Promote Conservation of natural resources
- Strengthen local governance of natural resources through increased community participation
- Introduce innovative technologies
- Create livelihood opportunities



Scarcity of water in large parts of India is as much a matter of paucity of rainfall as it is of poor water conservation and management practices. Fast depleting ground water resources and massive surface runoffs are two examples of this reality.

To help improve the situation, the Foundation made a modest beginning in Rajasthan in 2001 with a group of rural volunteers, our 'green corps'. These volunteers were trained in methods of water conservation and management and were initiated into community mobilization efforts for constructing and maintaining water harvesting structures. Since then, over 250 such structures have been built in the 9 districts of Rajasthan : Jaipur, Dausa, Karoli, Bikaner, Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Jalore, Barmer and Pali. Communities have been encouraged to form Jal Sabhas for maintenance of these structures and existing village level institutions have been strengthened through training workshops and exposure visits.

An account of the specific activities undertaken this year follows.

JAIPUR DISTRICT: JAMWA RAMGARH BLOCK

In Jaipur district, apart from constructing large number of water harvesting structures, the Foundation has been actively promoting improved agricultural practices & livestock development and organizing training workshops and visits to strengthen local governance of natural resources. Our work is spread over 28 villages of Jamwa Ramgarh block.

Water Harvesting Structures

Eleven structures (2 anicuts, 9 earthen dams) were constructed and 1 baawari was renovated. In addition, 51 loose stone check dams were made and 11368

running meters of farm bunding was undertaken.

Village wise details of the cost and benefits of these structures are as follows.

Water Harvesting Structures, Jaipur District

Village	Cost of structure (Rs.)	Coverage				
		No. of wells	Land (in Bigha)	No. of families	Population	No. of cattle
Khanya	55402	12	150	29	250	600
Bassi	203789	6	35	10	60	300
Thali	72350	6	12	24	150	180
Jhojharwala	114135	8	40	20	140	200
Ramyawala	133885	12	100	25	125	350
Raiser	596635	13	78	22	225	200
Barana ki Dhani	290285	5	50	20	100	100
Thali	107105	-	10	30	180	150
Trilokpura	118545	5	40	30	130	150
Darolai	108097	5	20	15	90	400
Raiser	164914	7	40	14	95	120

CASE STUDY

Barana ki Dhani is a small village located in Thali gram Panchayat of Jamwa Ramgarh. The total population is about 260 and it is spread over an area of about 230 bighas. This includes 50 bighas of pasture land, and 160 bighas of cultivable land.

The main crops cultivated in this area are "Kharif" crops like Bajra, Jawar, Corn & Gwar. The area suffers from acute water shortage. Over the past few years, a change in pattern of rainfall and reduction in quantum of rainfall has been observed. This has led to the problem of erosion of soil during heavy rainfall and depletion of ground water resources.

In the last few years, the Foundation has built or renewed several anicuts, talai, farm ponds and farm bunds. These have helped in conservation of water and led to recharge of both local and downstream wells. In one particular case, due to an anicut constructed in 2007, the agricultural land around it retained moisture for a longer period than in the past. This allowed the farmers to cultivate, for the first time, onion, which is a water-intensive crop. To everyone's surprise, the crop yield turned out to be a good 4 quintal onion per bigha. This has added substantially to the cash income of the farmers.

Capacity building

In continuation of the capacity building work started in 2006 with the support of GTZ, we undertook this year training of members of Jal Sabhas, green corps, self-help groups and Panchayati Raj institutions.

Overall objective of various training programmes has been to train these village level institutions to prepare village development plans and manage their institutions with efficiency and transparency. Issues like gender sensitization, conflict management and use of government schemes & institutions to implement village plans also figure prominently in these programmes.

Panchayat members were taken on exposure visits to Churu and Gopalpura Panchayat in Rajasthan. While Churu has successfully implemented a community-led project on safe drinking water, the Gopalpura Panchayat sarpanch has taken a pro-active role in preparation of village development plan.

Innovative Agricultural Practices

To promote the use of water saving techniques, the Jal Samiti volunteers of the Foundation helped popularize **sprinkler system** by assisting illiterate farmers with paperwork to enable them to avail 50% subsidy under a government scheme. To marginal farmers, the Foundation gave an additional 30% subsidy. So far 22 farmers have made use of this scheme, receiving Rs. 98,767 of subsidy and extending irrigation to 76 bighas of land. This awareness about sprinkler system was also spread through two **demonstration farms** that were developed to



Exposure visit of PRI members to Udaipur



Volunteers training in progress



A view of the Kisan Mela



Sprinkler system in a farm

showcase innovative agricultural practices. These farms also demonstrated the benefits of drip irrigation, horticulture, low water-intensive crops, water harvesting, scientific agriculture and use of organic manure and mulching. These farms are now beginning to attract many villagers from the neighbouring villages. Further awareness building about these innovative techniques and government schemes was achieved through **Kisan Mela** that was organised in Thali village. About six hundred farmers including a large number of women participated in this Mela. Many Agriculture department officials were also present to share information with the farmers. Various private companies put up their stalls to showcase their equipments and demonstrate new technologies.

Livestock development work this

year has involved artificial insemination of 500 animals which has resulted in 167 successful pregnancies and birth of 23 calves of improved breed. The livestock development work is carried out in our Cattle Development Centre.

KAROLI DISTRICT: SAPOTRA AND MANDRIAL BLOCKS

Our work in this district is mainly in the most backward *dang* area with its difficult terrain, scattered habitations and virtually absent infrastructural facilities. Its sheer backwardness has led us to go beyond the water conservation issues. Here we have tried to intervene through non formal schools, livestock and fodder development programmes and even provided assistance in getting pregnant women the benefit of institutional deliveries. We are also planning to expand significantly our water harvesting structure

network here. For this purpose, a mini watershed of about 600 hectares was identified in Rahir village of Sapotra block. The village, situated in the foothills of the Aravali mountains, has natural drainage features that particularly favour the kinds of structures that the Foundation has been constructing. Initial work of community mobilization and topographical survey has been started.

The local need being so desperate, we constructed 23 structures over and above the 16 originally planned. Since arresting soil erosion is one of the priorities in the area, we innovated with a different type of small structures called *pagaras* that are particularly effective in this task. Our structures helped increase arable area and agricultural productivity. They made possible cultivation of remunerative crops.

Water Harvesting Structures, Karoli District

Village	Cost of structure (Rs.)	Coverage				
		No. of wells	Land (in Bigha)	No. of families	Population	No. of cattle
Halkipura	155000	3	15	80	400	500
Ghatli	70274	4	15	85	450	550
Jhopadi Shyampur	55899	2	10	18	150	450
Ashaki	133252	1	150	45	250	850
Ashaki	105653	1	150	45	250	850
Nibhera	74533	7	100	18	105	550
Nibhera	67657	7	100	18	105	550
Dhandhuret	139300	8	10	20	625	675
Rahir	55818	50	100	350	1407	1600
Ghasinghpura	56666	5	10	30	210	590
Semri (Amreki)	267576	6	20	125	550	915
Amreki (Chamaro ka Pura)	110272	6	20	125	550	915
Jhopadi (Amreki)	139970	6	20	125	550	915
Jhopadi (Amreki)	49440	6	20	125	550	915
Albatki	51016	6	40	90	490	800
Albatki	92587	6	40	90	490	800
Albatki	69454	6	40	90	490	800
Albatki	109890	6	40	90	490	800
Albatki	32495	6	40	90	490	800
Ghasinghpura	69580	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	23507	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	55070	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	25197	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	18970	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	10642	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	82942	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	21580	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	70548	5	10	30	210	590
Ghasinghpura	70489	5	10	30	210	590
Chobeki	407054	10	30	225	700	600
Choubeki	34574	10	30	225	700	600
Chobeki	209386	10	30	225	700	600
Choubeki	12845	6	30	225	700	600
Choubeki	51070	6	30	225	700	600
Choubeki	156799	6	30	225	700	600
Jhopadi (Amreki)	32720	6	20	125	550	915
Jhopadi (Amreki)	49619	6	20	125	550	915
Jhopadi (Amreki)	67878	6	20	125	550	915
Jhopadi (Amreki)	22000	6	20	125	550	915



Balajisagar anicut at Khiwara, Pali repaired

Paiki Anicut, Semri, Karoli district



Integrated Development Programme

In 4 villages that did not have a primary school within 4 to 5 km, we have started non-formal education centres, named **Jeewanshallas**. We support teachers' honorarium, education materials, nutritional supplement and exposure visits of the 132 children enrolled in these centres.

To make it easier for pregnant women to have **institutional deliveries**, Foundation has provided a phone number they could call to ask for a free ambulance. To facilitate this arrangement, all pregnant women of the target villages are registered with us. This year, 41 women benefitted from this scheme. Through our assistance, these women were also able to access benefits under various government schemes.

To assist women who are still not able to avail of institutional deliveries, we organised training of 20 traditional birth attendants. In addition, village volunteers of the Foundation provided support to the local health worker for **immunization** of eligible children.

Poor land productivity in the area makes the additional income from livestock rearing particularly important for the people here. To assess how best we can help in **livestock development**, we asked BAIF to conduct a survey. Based on their recommendations and our own observations, we started working on breed improvement through artificial insemination of cows and buffaloes.

We established Artificial Insemination and Veterinary



Jeewanshalla, Ghasingpura



Calf of an improved breed

Bhikaliwala Pagara at Albatki



Clinical Centre at Kailadevi and three village-based sub-centres.

Keeping in mind the crucial role of livestock economy for the region, **fodder development** work was carried out on a pilot basis. Seeds of “*Dhaman*”, a local grass species which is a source of high level of protein and is suitable for local climatic conditions, were supplied free to 25 farmers in 5 villages. The farmers undertook the responsibility of land preparation, sowing and fencing of the land area.



‘Pad Yatra’ for creating awareness on bio-diversity conservation

PALI DISTRICT: MARWAR JUNCTION AND DESURI BLOCKS

Six new water harvesting structures, mostly permanent recharge structures made of stone, were constructed and 3 old structures were repaired. The effect of these structures plus 41 others that were constructed in the past has been an appreciable rise in the water availability in the wells and tube wells in the area.

We initiated community mobilization to preserve local **biodiversity**, especially focusing on plant and grass species that are on the verge of extinction. In addition, **afforestation** work was taken up through a plantation programme involving community members in 4 bigha of community land of village Guda Prem Singh. About 350 saplings of *Neem*, *Sisam*, *Ashok* and *Khejari* were planted. The temple trust and the village community have taken the responsibility of looking after the plantation.

Water Harvesting Structures, Pali District

Village	Cost of structure (Rs.)	Coverage				
		No. of wells	Land (in Bigha)	No. of families	Population	No. of cattle
Ladwa (Bansore)	253457	10	215	48	288	1680
Sadari	358299	10	300	150	900	3000
Bheelon Ki Dhani, Bansore	131798	5	50	10	70	200
Teekhi-Mandpur	154975	6	140	45	290	1550
Dhaal (Omba Ka Odha)	149782	5	105	18	135	365
Guda Durjan	224543	4	120	28	200	150

Summary of Water Harvesting Structures since 2001 to 2007-08

District	No of structures	Total cost Rs.
Bikaner	9	1778999
Dausa	4	640397
Alwar	7	1288534
Barmer	2	301140
Jalore	1	123000
Pali	44	9207370
Sawai Madhopur	3	152414
Karoli	78	8727373
Jaipur	116	16355913
Total	264	38575140

Note

1. Total cost includes atleast 33 per cent community contribution.
2. Funding support for the water harvesting structures was received from the Ford Foundation, DANIDA, Ireland Aid, Deutsche Bank, GTZ and Mr. K. S. Srikand supplemented by RGF

Education and Literacy

Programme vision

Our programmes aim to:

- Sustain literacy skills
- Foster quality in education
- Encourage education of girls, tribals and minorities
- Promote low cost good quality literature for children



Our strategy for improving quality of learning of children in the most backward areas and among the most marginalized communities has been to set up libraries & non-formal education centres, organise teacher training workshops, launch advocacy campaigns, promote book development and award scholarships. In most of these activities we have worked with a local partner institution.

LIBRARY PROJECT

We have set up libraries in both rural areas and slums. Some of them are located in schools and some even in bags or *jholas*. Most of these libraries provide opportunities for learning not just for children but also adults, and not just through books but also activities. The libraries have acquired a distinct identity as centres for educational and creative indulgence in their respective places of location- villages, slums or schools. A typical library has 400 to 500 books and is supported by us for 2 to 3 years. Our libraries especially cater the most marginalised communities and the most remote locations. Since 1993, we have provided support for 1354 rural and 110 slum libraries located in 22 states.

53 New Libraries in 2007- 2008

- 10 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat with Samerth as partner.
- 20 in Uttar Pradesh - 10 in Saharanpur district with DISHA as partner and 10 in Barabanki with Pashu Shwachhedan Audyogik Utpadan Sahkari Samiti Ltd as partner.



A library in Ahmedabad

- 10 in Bikaner, Rajasthan in partnership with Ajit Foundation.
- 13 supported with assistance from Good Gifts, a UK charity - 6 in Uttar Pradesh in Varanasi and Mirzapur districts in collaboration with Children Emancipation Society and 7 in Rajasthan in Gangapur city with NGO Samantar as partner.

Activities Organised

- Recreational and Literary Activities- drawing, painting, arts, sports and quiz competitions, dialogues, meetings, story writing and story-telling sessions. museum activities – collecting rocks, leaves, feathers and seeds.
- Pathak Mela- Community mo-

Map reading activities in the library at Kishorchanadrapalli





Science fair in a library at Jodhpur



A teacher demonstrates a model in the library

Book Rally in a village in Jodhpur



State wise distribution of Village Libraries supported so far

State	Nos.
Andhra Pradesh	135
Assam	43
Bihar	15
Chattisgarh	70
Delhi	2
Gujarat	10
Himachal Pradesh	9
Haryana	20
Jammu & Kashmir	5
Jharkhand	31
Karnataka	33
Kerala	10
Madhya Pradesh	6
Maharashtra	10
Manipur	25
Orissa	120
Punjab	20
Rajasthan	254
Tamil Nadu	161
Uttar Pradesh	116
Uttaranchal	122
West Bengal	137
Total	1354

State wise distribution of Slum Libraries supported so far

State	Nos.
Andhra Pradesh	11
Assam	1
Delhi	27
Gujarat	10
Rajasthan	17
Madhya Pradesh	3
Uttar Pradesh	10
West Bengal	30
Karnataka	1
Total	110

bilization through book fairs and Ghar Ghar Pustak yatra.

- Meetings of women's groups on issues such as maternal health, reproductive health, immunization, nutrition and weaknesses in implementation of government schemes.
- Workshops on magazine publication, rural journalism, computer training, gender issues, comic preparation, rocketry, puppetry, book binding, mask preparation, science model preparation etc.

Narayan Meghwal – exploring the world

16 years old Narayan Meghwal has always been a keen student. He secured 71% marks in tenth standard board examination. Until a library was set up by the Foundation in his village, he had no access to books other than the text books.

He visits our library regularly. He especially likes reading story books and newspapers. He also loves to read them to small children and illiterate adults in the village.

He actively participates in various activities like origami, drawing and painting, games and sports that are organised in the library. Sometimes, he even helps the librarian in organising them. Over time, he has grown in confidence and now he acts as a substitute librarian when the regular one is on leave. Librarian Krishna Kumar Changani thinks that 'Narayan is a responsible person and manages the library very well. Library has played a pivotal role in transforming Narayan's life and personality'.

DIKSHA – story of a shy girl, Sanwara village

Diksha is a nine years old girl from Sanwara village. She is a member of the Sanwara village library. Diksha has read hundreds of books in the library. She especially loves to read story books and recite them to others. She remembers names of at least 50 books which she has read.

Apart from reading books, Diksha also likes to draw sketches and play games like cricket and *kho-kho*.

Library has been able to bring a positive change in her personality.

- Science fairs with stalls on science experiment demonstrations.

Training of Librarians

We have consistently focused on building capacities of the librarians and volunteers of the library programme. This year they were trained in library management, fun-based activities, painting, craft, environment & science education, role play, drama, sports and games. The trainings were conducted by Jodo Gyan Educational Resource Centre, Delhi, Nalanda Resource Centre, Lucknow and resource persons from the National Book Trust.

EDUCATION OF MUSLIM GIRLS

Project EDGE, Hyderabad

Yakutpura slum in Hyderabad is perhaps not the most conducive place for adolescent girls to grow



Rana Fatima: towards a brighter future

Rana is a 16 year old orphaned girl who was brought up by her maternal uncle. He could not afford her educational expenses after 7th class. As a result, she was forced to drop out. She started to spend her time assisting her aunt in the household chores.

But Fatima wanted to become a teacher. Her uncle was persuaded to let her appear for the SSC examination as a private candidate. Our centre helped her prepare for the examination which she passed with first division. She has enrolled for computer training course at the centre.

up in. Our educational centres there try to change that in a small way. There are four of them that our NGO partner Mahita runs. It caters to over 400 girls. These centres try not only to teach out-of-school girls literacy and numeracy skills that will help them get back into schools, but also provide training in vocational skills. This year 174 girls were

Sahara Begum: *"Main aap ki shukr guzar hun, jo aap ne mujhe padhne ka mauka diya..."*

Sahara is a 13 year old girl who lives in Khan Nagar. Her father is a rickshaw puller. Her mother and her two elder sisters used to work in incense stick manufacturing factory until one of the sisters got married. Sahara was forced to take her place in the factory.

One day she met one of the motivators from the centre and narrated her story. The motivator visited her house and counselled her mother about importance of education. She convinced her that given an opportunity, Sahara will be able to change her life. Sahara was allowed by her mother to attend centre classes. She passed her examinations at the centre and now she is studying in a Government High School. She has joined the computer training classes at the centre as well and visits the community library regularly. She is also honing her communication and language proficiency skills.

Sahara's life has truly changed since the time she used to be a 13 year old incense stick factory worker.

admitted to schools and 92 benefitted from computer courses organised in these centres. In addition, there are 25 to 30 girls in each vocational course (like embroidery, mehndi designing, beautician, zari zardosi) in each centre.

Project Darakht-e-Ilm, Mumbai

Jogeshwari slum in Mumbai is teeming with young Muslim girls ready to take up any opportunities that might be available. Darakht-e-ilm project is one of them. Through it, 204 such girls are being taught by 10 teachers in five centres to help them remain in school or join a school. For those who are too old to be in school but are keen to learn, there are two education centres that teach functional literacy and vocational skills.

There are classes in computer literacy, English speaking, sewing and embroidery, flower making, making hand-bags from waste material, chocolate making etc.

The project also runs a community centre and library. Girls use it as a study centre and as a platform for

airing views and seeking mutual support on a range of issues. The centre has provided legal advice to more than 100 victims of domestic violence. The library attracts young children too who spend time here reading story books and enjoying the company of other children.

EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM GIRLS AND WOMEN

Project Saksham, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh

Helping women to help each other is usually a good intervention strategy in many social contexts. Something of this nature is being attempted in Bareilly villages through Saksham project with Sakar as our partner. Innovative methods like wall writing, nukkad nataks and soochna raths are being deployed to mobilise Muslim women and girls to come together to discuss the issues that they care most about. Thus, family issues, health and hygiene concerns, education and income matters figure prominently in these village level assemblies. 40 self help groups have emerged out of these deliberations.

Heralding Change – a women's gathering at Bareilly





A Nukkad Natak at Bareilly

Five Centres for Education and Action are used for many of these interactions and for literacy classes and workshops on vocational skills, life skills, personality development and creative expression. Around 70 women and 90 girls are benefitting from these classes.

Project Chetna Kendra, Gangapur City, Rajasthan

In the slums of Gangapur city, seven non-formal centres cum libraries are being set up to help school drop outs pick up their education again and re-enter the formal schooling system. These centres, named Chetna Kendras, are envisaged as places where activities involving the entire community will be held. Our NGO partner for the project is Samantar Centre for Cultural Action and Research.

Quality of Education Programme in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh

The Biswan block in Sitapur district is among the most backward regions of the country. It is inhabited mostly by poor

people belonging to Muslim, Scheduled Castes and OBC communities.

Beti Foundation, our partner, has set up here ten Education-cum-Vocational Training Centres (EVTC) to create new opportunities for girls to acquire reading, writing & mathematical skills and knowledge about their health and general well being. 570 girls are enrolled in these centres which provide textbooks, teaching-learning materials, basic furniture and stationery.

CHILD RIGHTS

Project Vision, Varanasi

Weavers of Varanasi District have been facing difficult times. The weaving industry is in decline and there are not many alternative livelihood options available. Project Vision attempts to soften the impact of these changes on the lives of children and their families.

Active in Nakkighat slum area, the project provides education through

two non-formal education centres and two pre-primary centres to about 65 children each. Two groups of 30 children each have been formed to understand issues faced by them and their families through workshops etc. Some of the children were taken to Delhi to participate in Bal Natya Utsav.

In addition, activists regularly organise meetings with women and adolescent girls to discuss health issues of children and women. They are motivated to demand better services from community health centres.

Immunization of pregnant women and infants has also been taken up to reduce IMR and MMR. Ration cards were made available to weaver households and workshops were organised on Juvenile Justice Act and Right to Information.

A status paper on "Struggle of the weavers for livelihood" was prepared during the year. The paper highlighted the conditions of the weavers and provided the starting point for interactions with officials regarding the entitlement of the weavers.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Foundation's collaboration with Pratham to develop and print good quality books for children between 6 and 14 years of age produced 9 new titles this year under RGF-Pratham Series, bringing the total number of titles printed so far to 31. The books printed during the year have been translated in Urdu, Kannada, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, English, and Telugu depending on the demand for the title.

KASHMIR INITIATIVE

Community library in Srinagar

Help Foundation runs a community library in Srinagar that has emerged in the three years of its existence, as a vibrant place for debates, workshops and social interaction for people of all ages.

During the year, children enjoyed here workshops on theatre, music, painting, art and craft. The college going students had discussions on unemployment and declining reading habits. A career counseling workshop for about 100 students was held.

A Senior Citizen Forum consisting of some of the prominent personalities of the valley has been formed. They meet every Saturday in the library to discuss local civic problems that are then brought to the notice of the concerned authorities. The library has an outreach programme, Shehjaar mobile library movement, that has taken books from the community library to schools in Srinagar, Mawar, Handwara and Kupwara.

During the year, 127 new members and 1450 new books were added. The total membership is 421 and collection is 5,050 books. This year some books in foreign languages like French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian and Persian were also introduced.

Village Libraries

Baramulla has three village libraries that are being run with the help of Human Aid Society. The

libraries are used by people from all walks of life and offer critical support to students, community members and educational institutions in the area. During the year, training of librarians and education volunteers on storytelling was conducted by Kathalaya; a Bangalore based Educational Resource Group.

Teaching Manual on Kashmir

'Discovering Kashmir' is a teaching



Field testing of Manual in Srinagar

A view of librarians and volunteers training in Baramulla



manual for middle school children that we have brought out with the help of Mr Feisal Alkazi's group Creative Learning for Change. The students will learn about the valley from the five themes the manual is divided in: Built Heritage, Culture, Language & Lifestyle, Arts & Craft and Natural Environment. There are interesting discussions in the manual on river Jhelum; the art objects of daily utility – the kangri, the samovar, the namdah; the Mughal gardens; wedding celebrations and the Wazwan.

The manual which itself came out

of a series of student workshops held in 2006 was field tested this year among students. The manual has received a very enthusiastic response from teachers and students alike.

Awards for Creative Writing

To discover literary talent and to expand the range of books available to children, creative writing awards were given away for second consecutive year. Awardees, selected by an eminent jury, were given prizes of Rs. 5,000 each.

Three awards each were given in the age groups 16-25 years, 25-35 years and above 35 years of age (women). Entries were invited through advertisements in local English, Urdu and Kashmiri newspapers.

Children's Film Festival

Some 5,000 children from underprivileged backgrounds had the pleasure of enjoying films like *Children of Heaven*, *Oliver Twist*, *Iqbal*, *Makdee*, *Eight Below*, *The Jungle Book*, *Great Dictator*, *Rocket Your Way To Fun*, *Happy Feet*, during a film festival that we organised in collaboration with our partner, Help Foundation.

Book Development and Printing

60 manuscripts developed through various interventions for discovering new literary talents in Kashmir, have been reviewed by NBT for publishing them in Kashmiri and Urdu languages. 9 of these manuscripts have already been shortlisted. In collaboration with Kashmir University and NBT, a 3-day workshop of shortlisted authors was organised to provide expert assistance to them.



Children's Film Festival in Srinagar



A Seminar in progress in Srinagar

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN RAJASTHAN

To complement our water conservation work in Jamwa Ramgarh, Foundation has sought the assistance of Society for All Round Development (SARD) to improve educational outcomes of children. Thus we have set up remedial centres for children with learning difficulties and bridge centres for out of school children. 14 remedial centres cater to groups of 25 to 30 children in classes 2 and 3 while 8 bridge classes are used by 225 children. Teachers

training was conducted at State Resource Centre, Jaipur. 3 Resource Centres equipped with educational material, books, toys, charts, maps and games have been established in Raiser, Thalli, and Neemla Panchayats.

In addition, there are 5 Adult Education Centres where 151 women are enrolled. Monthly meetings with parents and workshops on storytelling and creative writing for children were organised this year along with the annual sports meet and Parvesh Utsav rallies.

STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS IN KARNATAKA

Storytelling can be a wonderful way of teaching and imparting reading skills in children. This is



Workshop on story-telling skills by Kathalaya

especially true if the storyteller understands the art involved. So, we enlisted Kathalaya to train teachers and librarians in the techniques of storytelling, its body language and voice modulation requirements, preparation of story kits & cards and even on how to choose stories. 10 such workshops of 4 to 6 days each were held for 645 librarians and teachers in different cities of Karnataka.

SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAMME IN KARNATAKA

Prevention is a lot less expensive

READ professionals interacting with students on hygiene, Tumkur



than cure. There is perhaps no better way to prevent diseases than observing healthy sanitation and hygiene practices. To inculcate these habits in Huliya block of a very backward Tumkur district of Karnataka, an elaborate scheme is being implemented with the help of our partner NGO Anekal Read.

A manual on sanitation and hygiene education has been prepared with the help of government school teachers and children. Health walks, puppetry, street theatre, wall writing, poster campaigns and film shows have been organised. Children have formed Bal Gram Sabhas and Eco Clubs to find solution to hygiene and sanitation related problems. Inter school competition, with over 750 participants, was held and sanitation & hygiene camp was organised for 300 high school students in Yelanadu block.

EDUCATION SOFTWARE EVALUATION AND LOCALISATION OF CONTENT

Directory of available educational software

Over the last few years, there has been a rapid growth in the number of educational software available

for students of X to XII. Not all of them are of good quality. To help students judge the relative usefulness of these softwares, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted of a large number of proprietary and open source

materials by Centre for Study of Developing Society (CSDS)'s, SARAI unit. It is hoped that the result of this survey will become part of an online repository which can be reviewed and added to by the users online.

Fellowships for Localization of Content in Regional Languages and their Dissemination

To bridge the digital divide in the country, it is essential to make it possible for those not familiar with the English language, to use computers. To achieve this aim, 6 fellowships of Rs 70,000 each were funded by the Foundation (3 more by CSDS) for 6 to 9 months duration. Some of the fellows are expected to carry out localisation of FOSS computer desktop in Hindi & Urdu, of the Open Office user guide in Marathi & Urdu, of the KDE Desktop in Assamese, and of GNOME desktop in Kashmiri. Other fellows are expected to develop Hindi speech recognition software, publish in Telugu & Kannada, and prepare a glossary of scientific and computer technical terms in Oriya.

VIDYA GYAN SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAMME

It is often seen that many a promising child's education is tragically cut short when she is withdrawn from school for social or economic reasons. A scholarship can however sometimes go a long way in preventing this from happening. Shri Sivasubramaniya Nadar Educational and Charitable (SSN) Trust's most generous offer to provide scholarship for Dalit and Muslim girls in Varanasi, Barabanki and Rae Bareilly districts was therefore most enthusiastically embraced by the Foundation.

The scholarship of Rs 500 per month was given to 1,440 girls of class 6 and 9 for studies up to class 10. This amount is meant to meet expenses towards tuition fees, uniform, books, stationery and transportation costs. The selection of girls for the first year was made purely on merit-cum-means basis except for a few handicapped, orphaned, single parent, and extremely poor children, who were awarded on compassionate grounds.

The programme was formally launched in a function at Varanasi. Next year another 1,500 will be selected based on a competitive examination to be especially conducted by the Foundation for this purpose.

In addition to the scholarship, the girls are also provided group coaching classes which specially focus on English and Mathematics subjects. For girls studying in Classes 9 and 10, computer and vocational skills training is also being organised under the programme.

While the programme is being administered through 10 co-ordinating agencies, the scholarship amount is directly paid to the girls through bank drafts or transfer to their bank accounts.

The agencies helping us with the implementation are Beti Foundation, Gyan Vigyan Samiti and Pashu Swachedan Sahkari Samiti Ltd in Barabanki districts ; Project Mala, Human Welfare Association, Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra and Vision in Varanasi District and Sewa, Lok Mitra and Sabla in Rae Bareli district.



Vidya Gyan programme launch at Varanasi



A Vidya Gyan scholar receiving her first bank draft

Vidya Gyan scholars and their families at the launch function in Varanasi



Woman and Child Development

Programme Vision

Our programmes aim to:

- Support children and communities affected by conflict and natural calamities
- Empower disadvantaged women through expansion of their livelihood options
- Rehabilitate street children
- Promote women's leadership in sanitation



PROJECT INTERACT (INITIATIVE TO EDUCATE, REHABILITATE AND ASSIST CHILD VICTIMS OF TERRORISM)

INTERACT – I

Children are the silent sufferers of acts of terrorism. The Foundation currently supports school education of 752 such children (including 102 added this year) with allowances up to Rs. 12,000 per year to meet expenses on school fees, books, uniforms etc. The identification of these children is done with the help of district authorities, NGOs and individuals. 1,566 children have been supported by the Foundation so far under this Programme.

New Children Identified	
States	No. of children
Andhra Pradesh	45
Assam	02
Chhattisgarh	14
J&K	29
Manipur	12
Total	102

We like to remain in close touch with these children and their guardians. We keep track of how they are shaping academically and otherwise through letters, phones, birthday cards, meetings and workshops.

INTERACT- II

Some of the children supported under INTERACT I earn scholarship from us for higher education on merit-cum-need basis. 19 were selected in 2007-08 taking the cumulative total to 42. The amount of support is normally in the range of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 per child per year.

Advance courses opted by INTERACT II children	
Courses	No. of Children
MBBS	4
B.Tech / B.E (computer science, electrical, mechanical, aeronautical, electronics & communication engineering)	15
L.L.B	2
Other Courses (Multimedia, Computer Science, Pharmacy, Company Secretaryship, Veterinary Science, Nursing, B.Com, B.A).	11
General Nursing & Midwifery	3
Teacher's Training	2
Diploma courses – Pharmacy, Computer Applications, Stenography, Electronics & Communication	5
Total	42

Workshop for INTERACT Children

To create a positive learning environment for children we organise workshops featuring activities relating to music, dance, theatre, art, craft, painting and sports. This year we held a 3-day residential workshop in Agartala, Tripura for 30 children in the age group 11 to 18. During the workshop a counsellor and a doctor were present to give tips on health, nutrition and hygiene and to answer questions raised by the children.



Children wearing the masks they made in a workshop at Agartala



POST-TSUNAMI ASSISTANCE

Child Support Programme

Children who lost either or both of their parents in the tsunami that struck the Indian coast in December 2004 are supported so that their education is not disrupted in any way. 133 children (including 13 infants) are being presently supported. Out of these 90 are from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and most of the remaining are from Puducherry.

Four are from Andhra Pradesh. 222 children have been supported under this programme since its inception.

Workshop for tsunami-affected children of Andaman & Nicobar Islands

A three-day residential workshop was held at Campbell Bay for 25 tribal children. Workshop had sessions on creative and performing arts, physical and mental exercises and sports. Children were counselled on how to plan and set goals and how to deal with various issues affecting their lives. The workshop was received enthusiastically by children.



Boat craft at a workshop in Campbell Bay – tsunami affected children

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY RIOTS & EARTHQUAKE

Gujarat riots and Latur earthquakes orphaned a number of children. The Foundation supports them by meeting their education related expenses. The last of the 28 Latur child completed schooling this year. 52 children from Gujarat are still in school (22 others having passed out of school) and receiving our support. Two of them are also being supported for medical care while one is receiving assistance for attending an advanced professional course.



REACH Street children project at Indore

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

Children who are forced to live on the streets are vulnerable and need support for their survival, protection and development.

Project REACH – Indore

Since 1995, the Foundation has been supporting project REACH

[Rehabilitation, Education and Assistance to Children on Street] to provide security, shelter and a supportive environment to street children in Indore. There are 40 children in this shelter now, 33 of whom attend regular school and the rest receive education at non-formal centres. During the year, 11 children were rehabilitated with their respective families. Ten children successfully completed the paper envelope making training and 5 completed training in basic

computer application. Two health check-up camps were also organised for the children.

Child Development Centre, Neemrana

RGF has collaborated with Humana People to People, to run a Child Development Centre at Neemrana in district Alwar. The centre provides learning environment, mid day meals and health check-up facilities to children. This year 74 migrant and street children benefited from this centre.



School for children from migrant community, Neemrana

Child development Centre, Jodhpur

A Child Development Centre is supported at Fidusar Chaupar in Jodhpur district for the children of the mining community who otherwise accompany their parents to their unhygienic work sites. Here too a learning environment is provided with provision of educational facilities, mid-day meal, sports, health check-ups and medicines. About 100 children are benefitting from this intervention.

Poverty Alleviation Initiatives for Education of Girl Child, Manipur

For a household, one of the more long lasting impacts of poverty is an almost irreversible loss of educational opportunities for children, especially female children. To help poor families finance education of the girl child we have given to 50 women a conditional interest-free loan of Rs 4,000 for income earning activities like poultry, piggery, rabbit rearing and duck rearing. The condition imposed is that they will enrol their girl children in a school. For the first year, a one-time grant of Rs 3,500 is given to meet expenses of

education but for subsequent years the family is supposed to pay for it from the income earned from their businesses.

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MICROFINANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

To achieve a lasting and genuine empowerment of women, helping them build institutions that are capable of generating savings, credit and income-generating opportunities, has been found to be quite effective in a diverse set of countries. At the Foundation too a similar attempt is underway.

Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojna in Rae Bareli and Sultanpur

The programme was initiated in 2002-03 in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust for formation of SHGs in two districts of UP - Sultanpur and Rae Bareli. In the last 5 years, it has grown from strength to strength and now has developed into a powerful network of SHGs and their cluster level associations. The savings generated have been leveraged

through borrowings from banks and invested in a diversified portfolio of income generating activities.

Livelihood Programme through Bamboo Products at Jajpur in Orissa

We collaborated with Schumacher Centre for Development in 2006 to support the socio-economic needs of 100 of the most disadvantaged women of Jajpur by introducing an improved technology of bamboo basket making. This led to a 10 times increase in the income earned per day from Rs 10 to Rs 100. Our support to this programme ended this year.

Livelihood Programme for Women through Vegetable Cultivation in Pithoragarh

Through this programme we have supported women farmer groups to market vegetables. We have provided training, seeds, help in land preparation and a marketing outlet in Pithoragarh town. This year about 371 quintal vegetables

A shop selling vegetables grown by women in Pithoragarh



were sold, out of which almost half was sold through the marketing outlet provided under the programme.

Capacity Building Programme through Training in Food Processing in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

RGF continued its support to Unnati for providing training in processing of food items like fish and prawn based products, milk products, jam, jelly squash, fruit and vegetable pickles, spices etc. Seven training programmes were organized during this year for 214 persons. The products were well received in the Islands.

SHG Formation and Skill Development among Women of the Baiga Tribe, Chhattisgarh

Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh are among the poorest tribal groups in the country. We along with our partner Samerth have introduced the concept of Self Help Groups to them and tried to create awareness among them about group savings, capital formation and credit processes. They have also been trained in bee keeping, cane work as well as processing and preservation of minor forest goods. This being the first year of the project, substantive progress is expected only in the following year.

Project Swabalambini, Uttar Pradesh

Mahila Prabodhini Foundation has been working for many years now on stabilising Self Help Groups formed by it in 10 blocks of Mirzapur, Allahabad, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Jaunpur and Varanasi districts. This year, they introduced among 88 SHGs of 20 villages in Majhwa and Sadar blocks of Mirzapur district, training in such



Training for women on scientific practice in Agriculture, Pithoragarh



Food processing training to women in the Andamans & Nicobar Islands

Processed food products, Andaman & Nicobar Islands



skills as motor winding and repairing, mobile repairing, dress designing, stitching and embroidery, jute/quilted/fancy bags, computer education and DTP, toy making, and beautician.

Livelihood Project for Musahar Women through Bamboo Crafts, Bihar

Musahar community in Bihar lives in abject poverty. The Foundation is supporting KGVS, a local NGO to provide training on institution building and on production &

available various new livelihood options for them. Non-formal education facilities are planned for children.

Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Programme in Orissa

The Foundation is working with Gram Vikas to build toilet-cum-bathing units for 1500 household from 18 habitations in Ganjam, Gajapati and Nayagarh districts of Orissa. This is accompanied by an intensive social process of hygiene

working as commercial pilots in various airlines.

Child Counselling and Guidance Centre, Srinagar

The Child Counselling and Guidance Centre in Srinagar provides comprehensive, cost-free psychiatric care to children. It has an outreach programme for distant districts where psychiatric help is not readily available. The programme has created awareness about trauma symptoms and the need for counselling intervention. 634 patients visited the centre during the year and 5 medical camps benefitting 1,484 people were organised. Four child therapy workshops were conducted for 259 children and 4 family therapy workshops were conducted for 226 women.



Literacy class for Musahar women, Bihar

marketing of bamboo products, to members of this community. In addition, basic health and literacy inputs are also being provided. This is the first year of the project.

Initiative for Women and Children in the Mining Community of Rajasthan

This initiative, launched towards the end of the year, is for women and children of the mining community near Jodhpur in Rajasthan. It aims to help women form self help groups and to train them in skills that will make

education that has seen a high level of community participation.

Scholarships to Women Pilot trainees from Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi

In an effort to encourage girls to take up professions not traditionally common among women, the Foundation provides three scholarships per year to meritorious women undergoing training for pilot license at IGRUA. So far, the scholarships have been awarded to 34 women cadets. Most of the previous awardees are

Psychosocial support programme, J & K

This programme provides counselling at the community level in the militancy affected areas of Jammu and Kashmir. We aim to create a cadre of barefoot mental health counsellors who are trained in identifying symptoms of trauma and providing counselling. This year, 10 Blocks of Kupwara and Baramulla districts that are most affected by militancy were identified and two teachers from each block were selected as Master trainers. They provided training to

Psychosocial Support, J&K



113 teachers. Later, similar training was organised for 39 teachers of 14 blocks of Rajouri and Poonch districts. These efforts have significantly extended the outreach of mental health care in the state.

Psychosocial Support Programme in A&N Islands

Post Tsunami trauma for inhabitants of the remote islands

of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been severe. With very little professional help available locally, a well-designed psychosocial outreach programme with components of both training and counselling was urgently needed. Thus in 2005, with the help of the Foundation, a core group of counsellors trained 253 'site leaders' –doctors and teachers– who held weekly group counselling

sessions and individual counselling, as needed. Creative activities like sketching, painting, music and dance were organised to help relieve stress of children. 122 of these site leaders remained active throughout the project which ended in August, 2007, having made a useful contribution to the psychological healing of the people.

Adding colour to the lives of INTERACT children

