



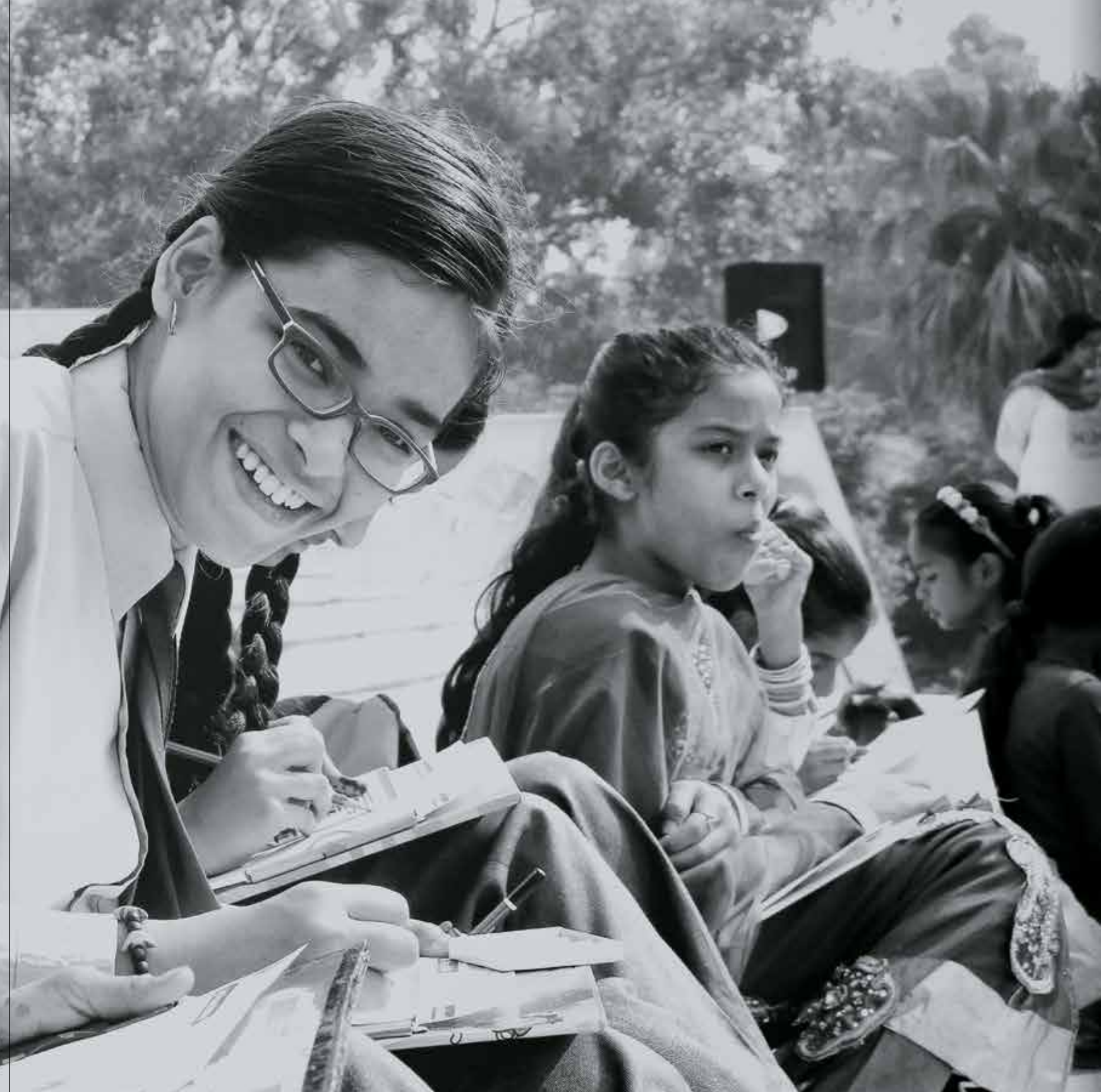
**Rajiv Gandhi Foundation**  
Jawahar Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road  
New Delhi - 110 001, India.

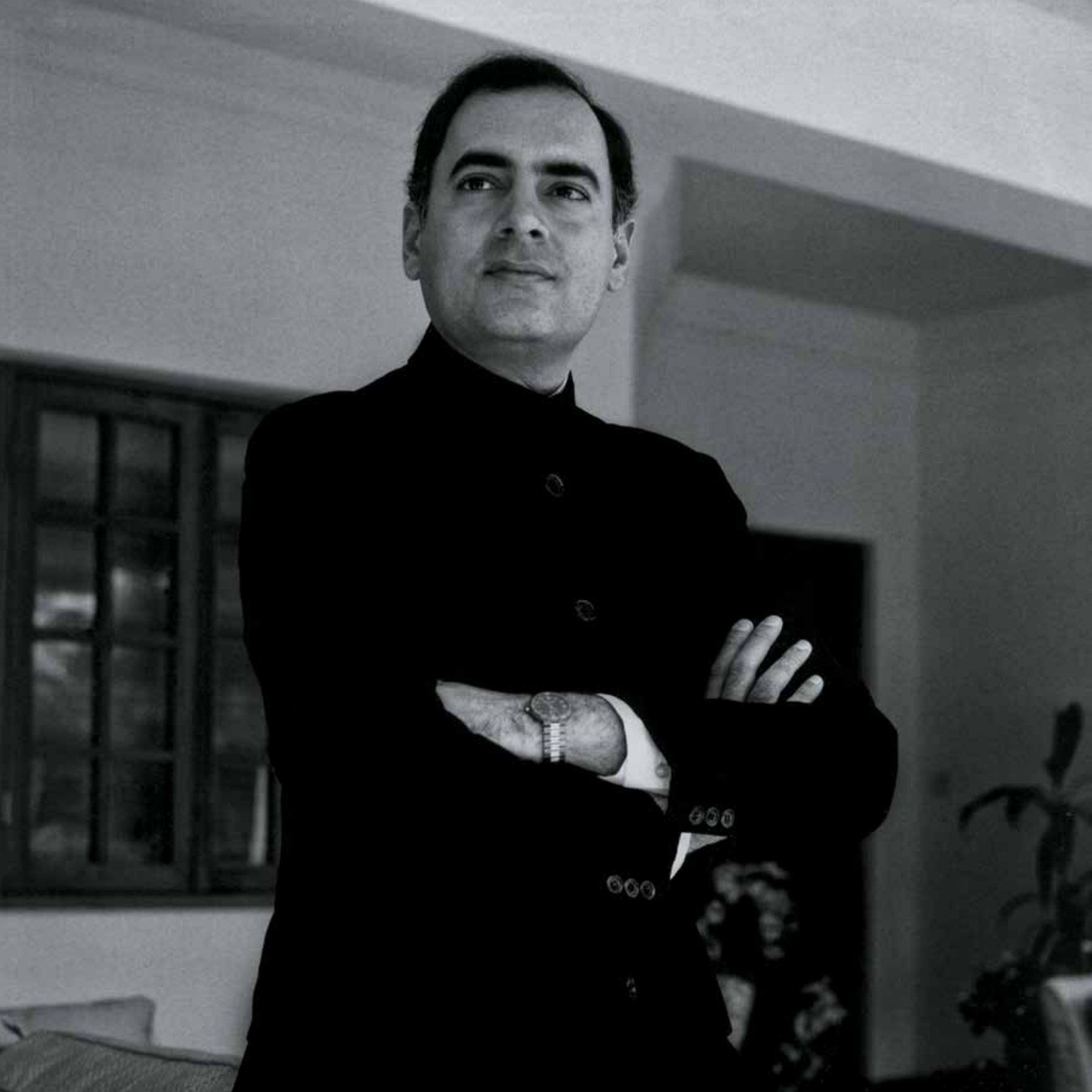
Ph: (+91 11) 23755117, 23312456  
info@rgfindia.org | www.rgfindia.org  
Facebook - @rgfindia

RAJIV GANDHI  
FOUNDATION

25  
Glorious  
Years

CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE





*“I am young, and I too have a dream.*

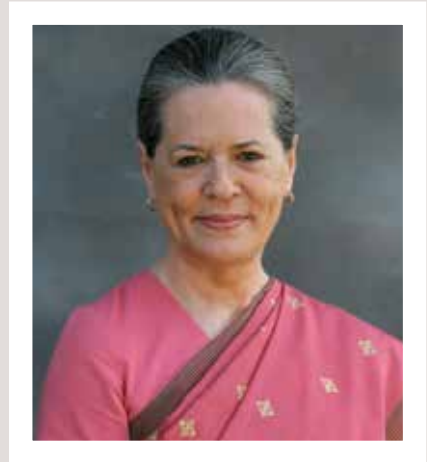
*I dream of an India - strong, independent,  
self-reliant and in the front rank of the nations  
of the world in the service of mankind.”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



### ***Chairperson's Message***

*Depending on one's perspective, twenty-five years is not really a long time, when it comes to carrying forward one man's vision, aligned with the aspirations of a nation. It's been a journey of twenty-five years for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation as a catalyst for change.*



*Like the country he loved and served selflessly, Rajiv Gandhi ji had the restlessness of the young, and the wisdom of the old. He listened to the voice of the socially marginalised, took the time to understand the issues at hand, and his vision set the template for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation to work with.*

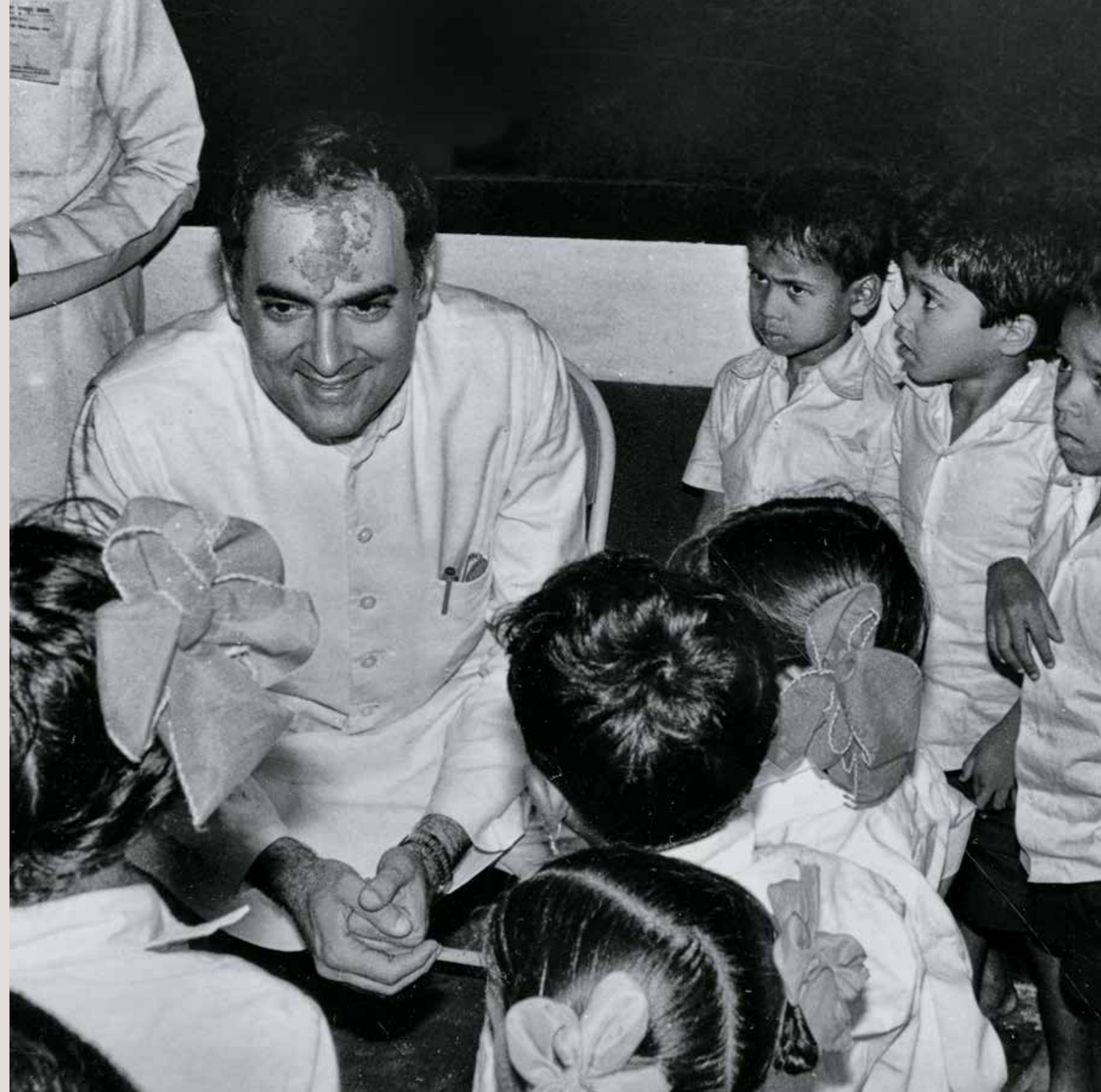
*The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has continued to follow that template, adapting when needed, to reach a wide section of society. From 1991, the Foundation has worked on a number of critical issues, including health, literacy, science and technology, women's and children's development, disability support, relief work, panchayati raj, and natural resource management.*

*Join us as we look back, through words and images, on the 25 years of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation.*

*Laxmi Jaisrini*

*“Education cannot be limited to literacy.  
It must be much broader and go into  
building the character and personality of  
the child.”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



# 1. Broadening the impact of literacy and education

*Universal literacy and education have been areas of high priority for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation from the beginning. The Foundation believes that a literate, educated population is best equipped to access and use productive resources. And the strategy has been to identify existing gaps and develop programmes to address the same. The work across various sectors of education has helped the Foundation build an ecosystem of programmes.*

*The Foundation initiated the Rajiv Gandhi Pustakmala series in 1992 to develop user-friendly material for neo-literates. In order to ensure easy access to reading material, village and slum libraries were launched in 1993.*

*The Foundation furthered the education agenda by launching a number of scholarship programmes, promoting capability based learning and building the capacities of teachers.*





## ***Libraries - Creating centres of information and knowledge.***

The Foundation worked towards making reading material available for neo literates by setting up over 1,600 libraries in villages and slums across 22 states since 1993. The libraries bring education, recreation, and practical information in remote villages and slums, empowering them through the initiative.

### ***Village and Slum Libraries***

Most of the libraries set up by the Foundation were either in villages or in slums. These village and slum libraries, each serving around 50 members helped in inculcating reading habit among neo-literates. A large number of these libraries have become self-reliant centres for disseminating information, and for documenting knowledge and wisdom from villages in the form of works written by villagers. The Foundation's knowledge and experience in establishing libraries has been widely recognised by both public and private institutions.

Over 1600 libraries nurtured  
in the rural and slum areas  
across 22 states in the country.

### ***Mobile Libraries***

To ensure that books reached a large number of people, the Foundation launched Mobile Libraries in 1992. These libraries have sustained the literacy skills of close to 1.2 million people, delivering books of their choice in their locality. This unique way of sustaining the skills of neo-literates has not only been popular and but was also effective. The Mobile libraries screened films about community life, and created awareness about the benefits of education through display exhibitions and posters.



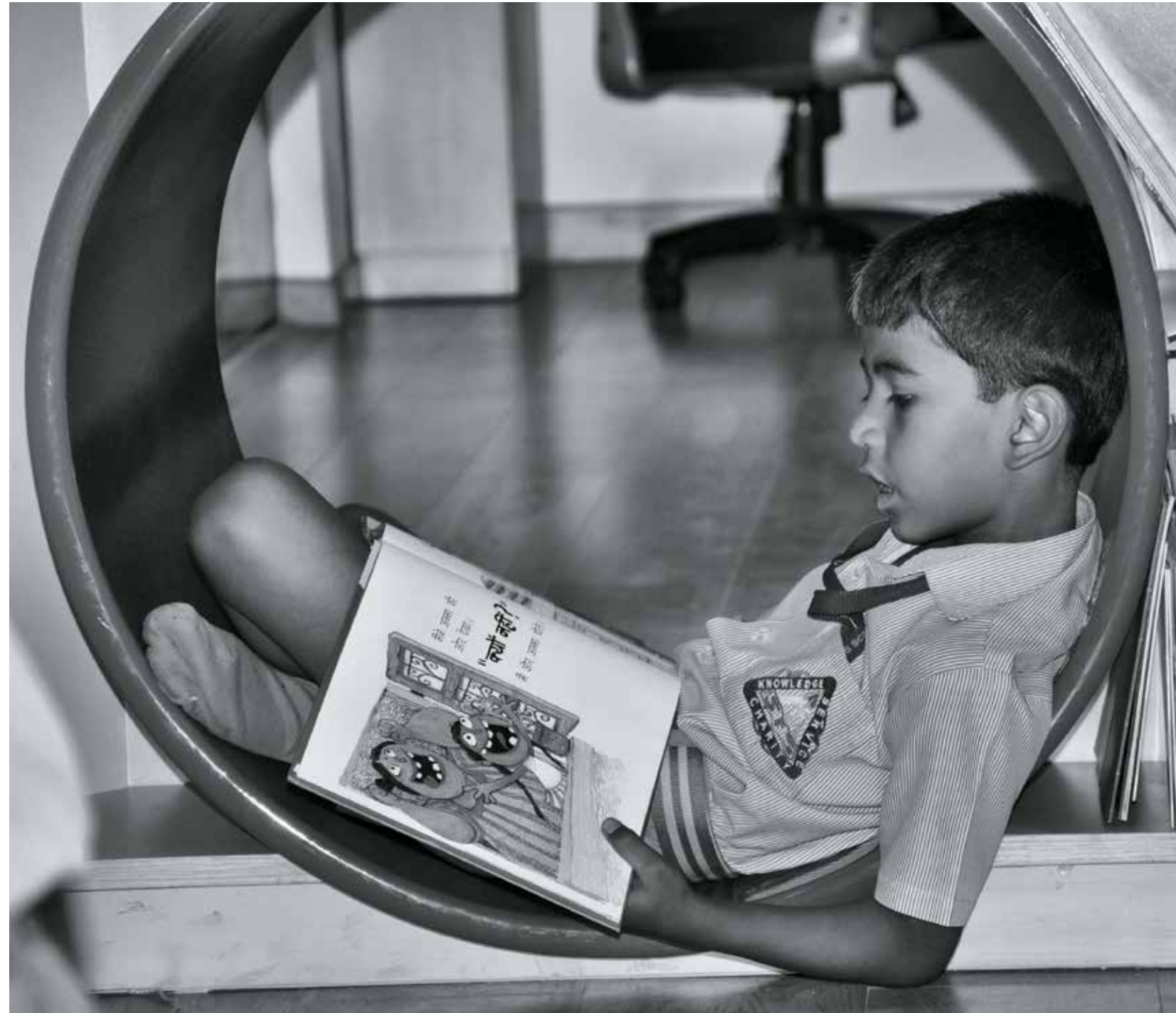
## *Wonderoom*

Initiated in 2011, the Wonderoom is an innovative children's library located at Jawahar Bhawan, offering children from different socioeconomic backgrounds an opportunity to explore a world of over 6000 books. Children also participate in a range of fun-filled activities around reading, storytelling, children's clubs, summer camps, theatre workshops, music and science activities.

Large numbers of children and their parents attend the i-Wonder events, where children showcase their talents. Wonderoom has also partnered with a number of schools and NGOs to enhance its reach. The Wonderoom children have gone on to perform at various venues including the World Book Fair, National School of Drama and children's festivals.

Wonderoom is open from 10am to 7pm on all days of the week.

The Library's bus offers mobile library services to many localities in Delhi.



### ∞ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ∞ WONDEROOM



Deepak Kumar was born to Suresh Kumar, an auto driver, and Phool Kumari on October 23, 2003. Deepak are three siblings living at 21-A Janpath, New Delhi. He has been a regular at the Wonderoom since many years. "I saw some children from my locality making paper peacocks. Later, they told me about a place called Wonderoom where they are taught such kind

of stuffs for free," he remembers. On being asked, he revealed his interest in science. With a swift laugh, he tells of his skill at repairing the circuitry of the house. And because of this reason, he takes a keen interest in the Fun Science sessions held at the Wonderoom. The sessions have helped him in his studies and school projects. He is currently studying in class VIII at Navyug School, Mandir Marg, New Delhi. He loves to draw and paint during his spare time.

*Promoting literacy, spreading knowledge through books.*

The Rajiv Gandhi Pustakmala Series was one of the several projects undertaken by the Foundation, either independently or in collaboration with other voluntary agencies like National Book Trust, Pratham Publications and State Government Bodies.

The topics covered in the books ranged from social issues and relevant information to recreational themes. Rural authors, especially village library members, were encouraged to write and publish their work as part of this series. The National Literacy Mission adopted the books published under the series. Several titles under the Rajiv Gandhi Pustakmala Series were published in regional languages to promote literacy in the backward areas of the country.

In addition, the Rajiv Gandhi Annual Lecture Series featured eminent Indians and foreigners speaking to students in the region. Over the years, several authors and illustrators' workshops have been also organised by the Foundation to provide a platform to emerging talent.



## *Scholarships - encouraging intellectual growth.*

Over the past 25 years, the Foundation has promoted the agenda of education by offering a wide range of scholarships. These scholarships covered school and college education within and outside India.



## ≈ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ≈ CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARSHIPS



Prita Kalyanasundram's experiences while working with low-income communities in India through the medium of education reinforced her belief that education is indeed one of the strongest foundations for development. She was inspired to take on greater challenges and impact a larger population of low income families across the country by gaining a rich theoretical knowledge and a global perspective. This desire propelled her towards pursuing an MPhil in Education Leadership and School Improvement at the University of Cambridge. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation Scholarship made it possible to realise this dream and offered her the opportunity to be inducted into the Cambridge Trust community.

As a Cambridge Scholar, she was able to interact with a range of students involved in diverse research fields. It helped her understand diverse human predicaments, perspectives and approaches and exposed her to peers from across the world and learn about the diverse education systems that existed. It also connected her to strong researchers, education practitioners and policy makers dedicated to providing equitable and quality education. She is currently working on improving school systems in India by engaging with School Leaders in government and low fee private schools.

### *Rajiv Gandhi Cambridge Scholarships*

The Foundation has since 1994 collaborated with the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust, UK, to support students access global education. During 1994-2011, around 60 annual bursaries were awarded to Indian students to pursue a second B.A. (honours) degree at the University of Cambridge.

During 1996-2012, the Foundation also offered 139 travelling scholarships for students studying in UK universities to visit India as part of their undergraduate and graduate studies.

Since 2014, the Foundation and the Cambridge Trust have been awarding Rajiv Gandhi Cambridge Scholarships for postgraduate education at the University of Cambridge.

## *INTERACT Scholarships*

Violence exists in our society in various forms, such as communal riots, ethnic conflict, and acts of terrorism. Children are the most vulnerable and the worst affected by such inhumane acts. The INTERACT scholarships programme initiated in 1993 supports young children who had lost one or both their parents due to an act of Terror or Conflict. The Foundation was one of the first organisations in the country to offer a scholarship of this nature.

These scholarships contribute towards the cost of school fees, books, uniforms and maintenance up to class XII. The Foundation has supported over 2,000 scholars across 11 states and union territories till date. In addition, the Foundation has provided scholarships to around 450 students to support their college education.

A large number of individuals and organisations have since come forward to support the initiative that began with Rs. 25 lakhs donated by Smt. Sonia Gandhi from the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace and Development posthumously awarded to Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1992.



**Alli Sabitha** belongs to Adilabad district of Telangana. Her father, late Shri Alli Sudhakar, was a private chauffeur, who was killed by extremists on August 31, 2001. The shock of Sudhakar's sudden death marked the beginning of an extremely difficult period for Sabitha's family. It was at this critical juncture that Sabitha, who was in class 1, started receiving

support from the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. The scholarship has been covering expenses towards Sabitha's fees, textbooks, uniform and other requirements for the last 11 years. Now in class 12, Alli Sabitha looks forward to studying further and becoming a doctor.

### ~ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ~ INTERACT SCHOLARSHIPS

**C. Govardhana Devi** resides in Warangal district of Telangana. Her father Shri C. Govardhana Rao was a police constable who was killed by naxalites on October 7, 1996. At the time of his unexpected demise, he was not only responsible for his children also his aged parents. The Foundation supported Govardhana for 12 years (class 1-12) through the INTERACT scholarship. Govardhana went on to complete high school in 2014-15 with 96% marks from Sri Chaitanya Junior College (Girls), Hyderabad. She also excelled in the EAMCET competitive examination to secure admission in the MBBS programme of the Gandhi Medical College, Hyderabad.



Over 2,000 scholarships to children affected by conflict in 11 states, over 2,900 VidyaGyan Girls scholarships, dozens of scholarships at the Cambridge.

To address the psychological needs of the scholars and help express themselves creatively, the Foundation continues to organise workshops centered on activities such as music, dance, painting, and sports. Doctors and counselors give children advice on issues pertaining to health, nutrition and hygiene. The Foundation pays close attention to the children's development not only in the academic sphere but also by stays in touch with them and their guardians through letters, phone calls, meetings, and workshops.





### STORIES THAT INSPIRE VIDYAGYAN SCHOLARSHIPS

**Julie** was born to Shri Panna Lal and Smt. Lalmani Devi on June 15, 1996, in Varanasi. As her father was a poor weaver whose meagre income failed to support the family, her mother worked at a nearby school as a maid. Julie was a bright and hardworking student and had a keen interest in the principles of science and the formulas of mathematics. Her family's financial situation was making it difficult to continue her education. When Julie was in class VI, she was selected for VidyaGyan Scholarship. Julie used the scholarship to pay her school fees, her uniform and books. "Before getting the scholarship, my school fee was always paid late," she says. The scholarship enabled her to complete her schooling.



### *Transformation through learning.*

Learning takes place more effectively if it evolves from the context of the child and is transformative in nature. A transformative approach to learning should aim at building eagerness and confidence in the child's ability to learn. It should enable the child to develop abilities that support the process of learning. Based on this belief the Foundation launched a series of programmes in 2010 which not only strengthened learning but also built the capacities of teachers and other actors in the education governance system.

### *VidyaGyan Scholarships*

In order to address the issue of girl child dropout, the Foundation in partnership with the Sri Sivasubramaniam Nadar Educational and Charitable Trust launched VidyaGyan scholarships. Initiated in 2007-08, these scholarships supported girls from marginalised and minority communities studying in classes VI to X. The programme identified areas in which scholars needed support in order to complete their education, and develop individual growth plans in terms of their interests and career choices. The scholarships supported the education of 1,860 girl children across Varanasi, Raebareli and Barabanki districts in Uttar Pradesh.





### *The Transform Schools Programme*

The Foundation launched the Transform Schools Programme in 2012 to encourage schools to become more child-centric. The programme was carried out with the active involvement of education departments at the state, district and block levels.

The programme reached out to 942 schools in 82 clusters across 7 states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The programme focused on enabling the teachers to move from just teaching to a larger and more empowering method of facilitating the child to learn. Children were encouraged to identify and develop different learning abilities through this process. Children learnt through concepts that were drawn from the syllabus content, with mapping of concepts done up to class V. Children were also provided feedback on an on going basis and encouraged to develop a range of abilities. The interventions focused on enhancing the speaking, writing, reading, and social skills of around 50,000 children.





### ***Decentralisation of Education Governance***

The Decentralisation of Education Governance programme was conceptualised in 2010 to build and strengthen structures to enable decentralised planning of education. Recognising that Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) were the true representative bodies of the community at various levels of governance, the programme aimed to strengthen the institutional capabilities of the school management committees and standing committees for education at the gram panchayat, block and district levels.



The Decentralisation of Education Governance programme actively collaborated with NGOs and government to reach out to more than 8,000 schools in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

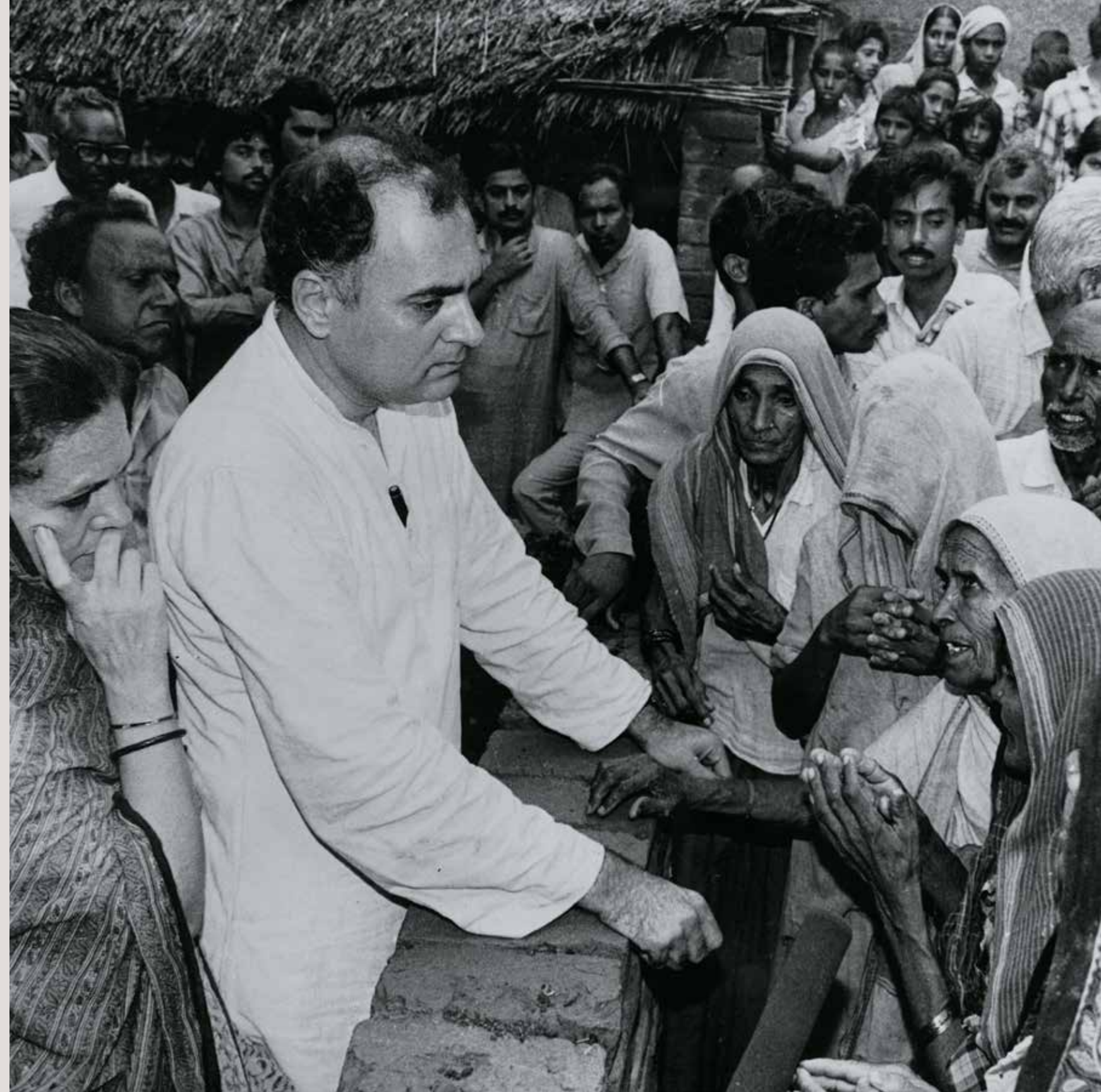
### ***Teacher Empowerment***

The Foundation conceived the Teacher Empowerment Programme in 2011 to redefine the role of teachers as facilitators who design equal opportunity for all children. It sought to provide a robust and comprehensive framework of analysis and intervention for building the capacities of teachers and refining the teacher management system.

As part of this programme, the Foundation supported the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) to conduct courses leading to a Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.). The programme reached out to 76 DIETs in 8 states as part of the process. The Foundation also established the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation Chair for Teacher Development and Management at the National University of Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA) and carried out a national study to analyse the 'Working Conditions of Teachers'.

*“Women are the social conscience of a country.  
They hold our societies together.”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



## 2. Empowering women and children

*In line with Shri Rajiv Gandhi's vision, the Foundation has worked towards empowering women and children since 1993. The key efforts include promoting education among girls in Jammu and Kashmir, supporting families affected by conflict, rehabilitating street children, counselling for smart parenting and scholarships for women pilots.*





## ***Project EDGE***

Project EDGE was born out of the Foundation's concern towards the welfare and protection of children, particularly girls. Under this project, motivational-cum-educational centres were set up to act as channels into formal schools for young girls from slums. The girls learnt practical skills that not only helped with immediate monetary returns but also realise their potential.

A particularly satisfying success story was scripted in Yakutpura, within the walled city of Hyderabad, where EDGE was launched in August 1996 in collaboration with Mahita, a local NGO. During the year, nearly 300 girls between the ages 6 and 18 years enrolled to learn literacy, numeracy, and language skills. The specially designed teaching package created awareness among the children, and helped them identify problems and find solutions.

Over the years, girls were also offered vocational training in screen-printing, tailoring and beauty care to equip them with social and financial skills. Over 100 girls from these centres successfully went on to formal schools, and their progress was regularly monitored. In 2005-2006, education and vocational training for 428 Muslim girls was undertaken. In 2007-2008, the project supported four educational centres for adolescent girls.

EDGE centres acted as channels into formal schools for underprivileged girls who learned practical skills that led to monetary returns.

## ***Project REACH***

For children living on the streets of India, a life of oppression and abuse is an inescapable reality. In order to support these children, the Foundation initiated Project REACH (Rehabilitation, Education, and Assistance for Children on the Street) in 1995.

The outreach centres were set up with the support of the district administration and the police department in areas where street children were found in larger numbers at places like the railway station.

Children young enough to attend school were given non-formal education, admitted to schools in the neighbourhood, or coached for open



### ❧ **STORIES THAT INSPIRE** ❧ **PROJECT REACH**



Thirteen-year old Sonu Gulab Singh is a veteran of the Aarambh-Reach Shelter home. In the four years that she has spent in the shelter home, her childhood trauma has transformed to confidence. A resident of a village near Neemuch, in Madhya Pradesh, Sonu's life changed when her father died and her grandfather forcibly married off her mother to another man for money. With her two sisters, Sonu continued to stay with the grandparents, slaving away, taking care of the goats and doing housework. A village resident who was concerned about their plight referred their case to the shelterhome. When Sonu entered the shelter home she was severely anaemic due to malnutrition. The

loving care of the staff revived her and she was enrolled at the non-formal education centre to catch up with children of her age. She took the Vth standard exam, passing it with flying colours. Today this VIIth standard student is an all-round performer, excelling in studies, sports and extracurricular activities apart from showing a keen interest in mastering the computer.



Project REACH has rehabilitated multitudes of children living on the streets by providing shelter, education, meals and medical care.

school exams. Those above 14 years of age were provided vocational training and supported to start their own enterprises.

In 2004, the Foundation supported Aarambh in Indore, Nitya Seva in Bhopal, and Karm Marg in Faridabad, which were working towards the protection of street children.

In 2007, the Foundation collaborated with Humana People to People, at Neemrana in District Alwar, Rajasthan to provide learning support, midday meals and health check-up facilities to 74 migrant and street children. A similar centre was supported at Fidusar Chaupar in Jodhpur for 100 children of mining community.



## *Smart Parenthood Campaign*

The Smart Parenthood Campaign was designed to sensitise the population at large about social issues like female foeticide, safe sex, HIV-AIDS and issues relating to reproductive health. The idea was to sensitise, involve, and build the capacity of the primary (youth and newly married couples) and secondary audience (service providers, NGOs, panchayats, government officials, school and university teachers, volunteers, media, and other influential sections) to address reproductive and sexual health needs of youth. The project was carried out in Kurukshetra district of Haryana which had the country's worst girl child sex ratio of 771 (as per census 2001).

After a comprehensive community assessment, the project team developed training manuals and a systematic communication campaign. Linkages were established with various government departments like health and family welfare, the Directorate of Audio-visual Publicity (DAVP), Folk and Cultural Division, local newspapers and TV channels. Village Health Committees (VHCs) were formed in the 100 villages of Thanesar, Babain, Shahbad, Pehowa and Ladwa blocks of the district with participation of panchayat members, religious leaders and other key stakeholders to strengthen the health delivery system.

## *Initiatives for Tribal Women and Children*

Over the last 25 years, the Foundation has led a number of programmes for the upliftment of tribal women and children through education and income generation activities.

In the year 1994, the Foundation imparted training to tribal women in pottery designing, promotion of literacy and encouraging entrepreneurial skills in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh.

In 1995, the Foundation started a training-cum-production centre to make 140 tribal women economically self-sufficient in Mayurbhanj, Orissa. The Centre trained them to make machine-pressed leaf plates and cups, and taught them marketing skills.

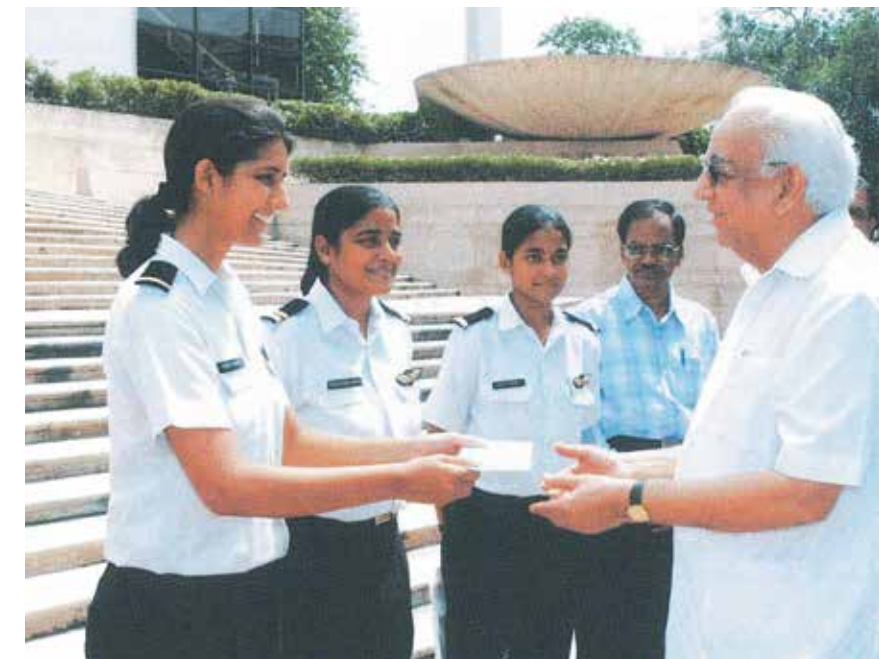
For several years, the Foundation supported basic education of tribal girls between the ages 6 and 14 years at education centres in eight villages of Vallabh Nagar Tehsil, in Rajasthan's Udaipur district.



## *Pilot training for women*

A professional pilot before joining politics and becoming Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi was keen that women should join the then male dominated sector. To encourage women to acquire the requisite skills, the Foundation awarded annual scholarships to over 30 women pilot trainees at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy in Raebareli.

The meritorious women pilot trainees got jobs with prominent airline companies in India and overseas such as Air India and Jet Airways.



*“It is our society that really makes a physical disability into a handicap and this is what we must change in our society.”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



### 3. Enabling the differently abled

*The welfare of the differently abled concerned Shri Rajiv Gandhi greatly. The Foundation formed a special cell for the differently abled in the founding year itself concentrating its efforts to identify the needs of differently abled people. The Foundation also developed programmes to raise awareness, generate employment and develop skills among the differently abled to make them self reliant.*

*In the year 1991, the Foundation sponsored a revolutionary idea of a hospital in a train travelling long distances to provide sophisticated and much needed free medical care to the differently abled in rural areas. Thus was born the Lifeline Express.*

*Since 1992, the Foundation started giving out motorised tri-wheelers to differently abled people to provide them with increased mobility under the Rajiv Gandhi Access to Opportunities Programme.*

*The hearing impaired children were provided with free hearing aids by the Foundation. In 1993, the Foundation also help setup the first braille library in Raebareli. In 1996, the National Centre for promotion of Employment for Disabled People was formed in Delhi with the support of the Foundation.*

*In order to make Delhi accessible, the Foundation launched the Accessible Delhi campaign. As a result of the campaign various infrastructural developments were made to make the capital city more accessible.*



### *The Rajiv Gandhi Access to Opportunities Program*

Based on the belief that the increased mobility of a differently abled person greatly enhances their access to education and employment, the Foundation launched the Rajiv Gandhi Access to Opportunities Program (RGATO) in 1992. Through RGATO, the Foundation awarded specially designed vehicles to differently abled young people. The Foundation has supported more than 2,500 awardees from 25 states and five union territories to access higher education and employment, attain financial independence in society. RGATO has received tremendous support from corporate bodies and concerned individuals too.

By 2016, the Foundation has empowered over 2,500 differently abled people with increased mobility to access better opportunities.



∞ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ∞  
**RAJIV GANDHI ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM**



On the afternoon of December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1991, Mateen and his shop assistant Ramsharan visited the flea market behind Red Fort. While they were exploring the market, there was an explosion. With wet eyes, Mateen recalls the terrorist attack, that left him with an injured leg. Someone took him to the LNJP hospital where the doctors informed Mateen that he had lost his leg.

After 26 months of treatment and severe financial crisis, Mateen realized that it wasn't just his leg, but he had lost his business and most importantly, his confidence too. Mateen had a wife and two kids to look after. Before losing his leg, Mateen had an established business of making almirahs. He tried getting a job, but due to lack of educational qualifications, he couldn't find one.

His attempts to re-establish his business met with little success. He

realised that although making almirahs was a job that needed only his hands, the big problem was of mobility. When Mateen visited the hospital for a check up, he discussed his situation with the doctor, who informed him about the Rajiv Gandhi Access to Opportunities Program. With the doctor's help, Mateen applied for a motorised vehicle. Mateen was awarded the vehicle by the Foundation in 1993. There was no looking back for Mateen. After getting the motorised vehicle, Mateen was independent once again. He could work till late and was not dependant on public transport to commute. His business started flourishing again. Mateen has come a long way since then. He has married-off three of his daughters and is actively engaged in helping other differently abled people. He fondly calls his motorised vehicle his personal 'airplane'.

## *Lifeline Express*

The Lifeline Express was the first hospital on a train. It comprised four railway coaches converted into a mobile operation theatre equipped with the latest equipment. This sophisticated hospital on wheels brought diagnostic and surgical treatment to polio, cataract, and hearing impaired patients, and support appliances.

Starting 1991, the Foundation has supported the Lifeline Express and helped expand its reach across 12 states, providing medical relief to over 2,00,000 people.





≈ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ≈  
**LIFELINE EXPRESS**

Twinkling eyes overshadowed by an ugly cleft lip. That's how the locals described the tiny 8 month old Mamata. Despite an extremely chubby and attractive face, Mamata was doomed to suffer because of a cleft lip and parents so poor that they could not afford the cost of her corrective surgery.

In 2003, the Lifeline Express had a halt near village Saray, where Mamata lived. Once she was taken for screening and selected for surgery, the happiness of her parents knew no bounds. On 20 November 2003, Mamata was operated upon. Today, the twinkle in her eyes is even brighter.

Seven-year-old Vijay from village Alampur, Uttar Pradesh, contracted polio soon after birth and was confined to crawling in his early years. With age, he tried to walk with homemade bamboo crutches, but it was difficult and risky. In fact, Vijay was insecure about going anywhere on his own.

In 2003, the Lifeline Express came near his village and Vijay underwent surgery. Post the surgery he could walk with the support of plastic calipers. Walking unaided to the train for a check-up, he said, "I will go to school, study to be an engineer and play football".

## *Other initiatives for the differently abled.*

The Foundation has carried out several programmes over the past 25 years to support the differently abled.

In 1991, the Foundation organised seminars in partnership with NGOs in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and New Delhi. During these seminars, aids like wheelchairs, crutches, and hearing aids were distributed to differently abled children. In 1993, the Foundation supported the setting up of the first Braille library at Raebareli. The same year a seven-day painting exhibition by differently abled children was organised to commemorate the 49th birth anniversary of Shri Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi. To generate increased employment opportunities for the differently abled individuals, the Foundation supported the setting up of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People in 1995.

In 1996, the project CATERED reached out to assist differently abled children through a specially designed computer programme. The following year, the Foundation collaborated with NIIT and the Spastic Society of Tamil Nadu (SPASTN) for phase 2 of Project CATERED which developed a new software 'I Write Plus: An Interactive Learning Environment for the Disabled'.

In 2001, the Foundation started working to make Delhi accessible for the differently abled. A consultation meeting was organised by the Foundation in collaboration with the Council of Architecture and the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for the Disabled to develop a blueprint for a barrier-free Delhi. The programme was continued for almost a decade and led to some major infrastructural advancement in the national capital.



*The greatest need today in our medical system is for a much higher dedication. We have to instil this enthusiasm. We have to build into the system of education and training.*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*

*Excerpt from Shri Rajiv Gandhi's speech at the Centenary Celebration of St. Stephen's Hospital, Delhi, 25 November 1985.*





## *Crusade against HIV/AIDS.*

In 1996, the Foundation launched a multi-sectoral, multi-media social mobilisation campaign to increase levels of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and build an enabling environment for open dialogue to support health-seeking services and safe behaviour. Combating stigma was another important goal. The Foundation trained community based groups on HIV/AIDS, set up condom depots, offered individual counselling services and HIV testing services across states at scale.

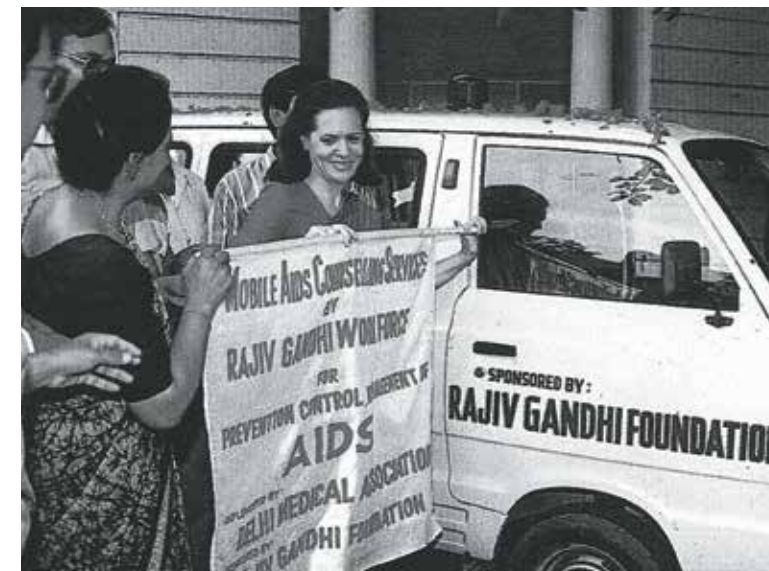
The Rajiv Gandhi workforce started operations to create a network of well-informed professionals who could work to prevent, control and manage HIV/AIDS. The workforce comprised over 1400 trained general practitioners and 450 NGOs. To supplement the efforts of the workforce, the Foundation launched the Rajiv Gandhi Mobile AIDS Counselling Services in Delhi and Mumbai that benefitted over 20 lakh people.

**Red Ribbon Express.** A key component of the Foundation's HIV/AIDS awareness programme was the Red Ribbon Express, an 8-coach train that served as a mobile education and exhibition centre using technologies such as interactive touch screens and 3D models. It had its own auditorium to host education sessions for Aanganwadi (child-care centre) workers, self-help groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) serving youth and women. A separate coach provided six cabins for counselling and medical services.

## 4. Creating awareness and providing medical services

*Recognising health as a development imperative, the Foundation launched several projects since its inception in 1991. The goal was to evolve and support innovative public healthcare strategies that were accessible and affordable. The programmes focused on health planning and prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases with emphasis on primary healthcare, adolescent health and policy advocacy.*

*The Foundation's crusade against AIDS through multiple programmes focused on awareness generation. The TB Control Programme initiated in 1992 worked to greatly eradicate tuberculosis from Himachal Pradesh. A number of medical camps were organised across states which offered free medical assistance to thousands.*





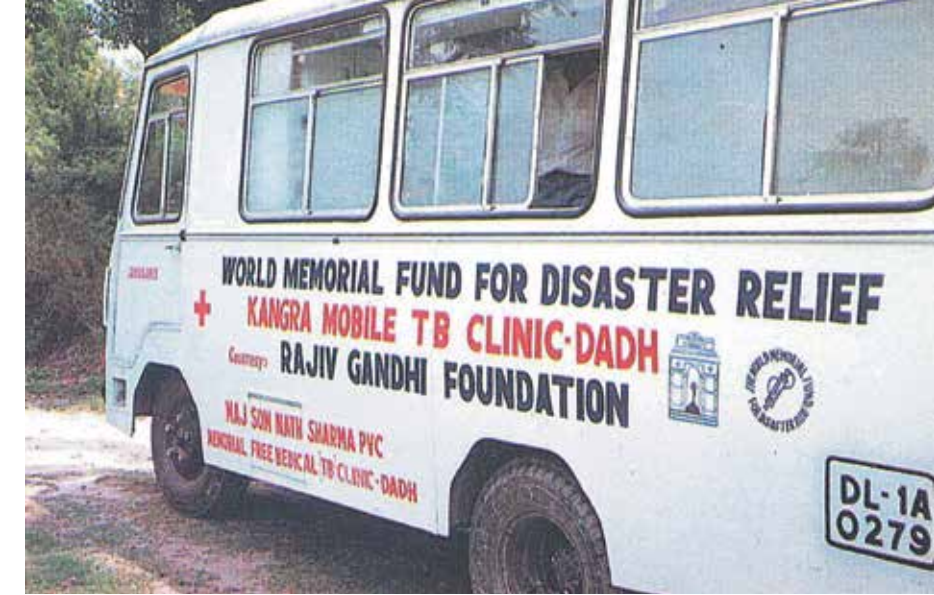
The Red Ribbon Express aimed at reaching the youth belonging to disadvantaged communities, with information on HIV/AIDS prevention. The youth played a central role in the programme's success. Young communicators, part of Nehru Youth Centres, travelled on the train, to create awareness. In towns and villages across India, the teams staged plays and skits about preventing HIV infection and fighting AIDS stigma and discrimination.

Till 2008, Red Ribbon Express reached over 60 lakh people covering over 11,000 sites and 40,000 villages.

## Other health initiatives.

The Foundation's work in public health began in 1992 with HRIDAY (Health Related Information Dissemination Among Youth). Launched in collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, it promoted awareness of health issues and healthy living habits among school children in particular, and the community as a whole. The same year, a campaign to deal with tuberculosis was launched in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, and Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. Under another unique initiative implemented by the Foundation in Mussoorie, 100 cycle rickshaws were provided to human rickshaw pullers, and a health coverage scheme was organised under which medicines funded by the Foundation were provided to those suffering from TB and other diseases.

The Foundation also launched the Rajiv Gandhi Home Cancer Care Services under which specialists visited patients regularly and provided much needed advice.



*“Development is not about factories, dams and roads. Development is about people. The goal is material, cultural and spiritual fulfilment for the people. The human factor is of supreme value in development.”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



## 5. Creating opportunities for livelihood

*The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation believes that a just society is one where all are self-reliant. Based on this belief the Foundation led several initiatives for creating livelihood opportunities in some of the most backward areas of the country.*

*Starting 1991, the Foundation began its work by supporting the “Trees for Life” initiative, which offered fruit saplings and seeds for cultivation to rural households in many parts of India.*

*The Foundation initiated its natural resource management (NRM) programme in November 2001. In 2011, the Foundation helped create Gram Gaurav to take this work forward.*

*The Foundation also worked towards creating a cadre of paravets and building the capacities of women in pursuing economic activities.*





## *Natural Resource Management*

The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has been working on natural resource management since 2001.

The major focus has been on improving productivity of their land resources, increasing availability of water, and making conditions favourable for better returns from agriculture.

The construction of water harvesting and soil management structures resulted in increased availability of water, development of new land and higher agricultural production.



## *Water Conservation and Land Development*

In order to address the challenges of water scarcity and poverty, the Foundation supported community members by constructing more than 400 traditional soil and water harvesting structures. Land development was mainly done by creating *Pagaras*, while *Pokhars* and *Anicuts* ensured effective water harvesting in the villages. The community contribution in these activities has been as high as 40%. Since 2007, approximately 700 hectares of new arable land was developed through the construction of *Pagaras*.

Over 400 structures are helping the Dang residents live a better life by preserving rain water.



Before construction of the water harvesting structures and *Pagaras*, only paddy was produced. That, too, was dependent upon the quantum of the rain received by the area. Production increased from a meager 1.5-2 quintal/bigha, to 9-10 quintal/bigha.

Similarly, the production of wheat, which is being cultivated for the first time, showed a very satisfactory result. Since the formation of harvesting structures, it has been possible to increase the duration of the water storage in the cultivable land and the resulting moisture by around 3-4 months. As a result, for a decade, people have started growing wheat in the Rabi season.

≈ STORIES THAT INSPIRE ≈  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - GRAM GAURAV SANSTHAN

**Dang region** in the Karauli District of Rajasthan is known for its backwardness. The tiny valleys of Aravali have been safe havens for bandits. The region is deprived of basic amenities like roads, electricity, schools or medical facilities. The main regional occupation agriculture, also suffers due to water scarcity. No efforts were made to harvest rain water or other natural resources until the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation came to the rescue. The Foundation has built over 400 water preservation structures in various villages in the region. It has helped setup the Gram Gaurav Sansthan to carry forward the Foundation's work in *natural resources management* with the help of local residents and panchayats. One such example is Maharajpura, situated in the foothills of the Aravalis in the Sherni region. The village is home to 100 families out of which 98 belong to the a backward-class community and two schedule tribes. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation took out an awareness rally in the region to join villages to its rainwater harvesting campaign. The team visiting Maharajpura called a meeting of the residents and informed them about the benefits of rain water harvesting and how it can change the face of the village. The villagers were already aware of the work the Foundation was doing in the villages nearby. It was mutually decided by the villagers and the Foundation to develop a structure to preserve rain water. The Foundation provided the major portion of the monetary assistance. After getting the no objection certificate from local officials, in 3 months a lake from rain water came up which could supply ample water for agriculture in the village. In 2012 (the year the structure was built) a total of 712 acres of land was sown and in no time the farms were filled with fresh harvest. The next year, the village produced a total of 1840 quintal mustard, 3378.80 quintal wheat and 20 quintal of barley. The year after, the land sown increased from 712 to 825 acres as the villagers were able to level the dilapidated 113 acres and the production increased accordingly. The villagers take time out to maintain the lake during rainy season and are living a happier life.





## *Agriculture*

For the optimum utilisation of increased land and water availability, the Foundation supported villagers by making seeds available on time and intensified cultivation techniques for improving crop productivity.

One of the major constraints faced by local farmers in Dang was the sustained availability of paddy and wheat seeds. There was no network available in the region to procure quality seed on genuine prices from the seed depot/seed sale counter of state department of agriculture, authorised seed dealers of state seeds corporation, national seeds cooperation or sale counters of state agricultural universities. The village network and local shop owners were the only source for seed procurement.

Mostly home-based storing methods were practiced, and, in the absence of appropriate knowledge of seed management, the seeds became worthless in many instances putting additional financial burden on the farmers. In order to maintain the uninterrupted supply of local seeds, the Foundation supported the establishment of three community- based seed banks. These banks

functioned as nucleus banks and improved community seed management including its production, procurement, storage, and distribution in 50 villages. The Foundation also promoted Systematic Rice Intensification (SRI) and Systematic Wheat Intensification (SWI) in the project villages. The farmers were trained through exposure visits and briefings. Till date, over 300 bighas of land have been brought under SRI and SWI cultivation.

## *Partnering with Gram Gaurav to find solutions*

In 2011, the Foundation helped create Gram Gaurav to take forward its NRM work and has been supporting it since then.

The Gram Gaurav Sansthan is a community based grassroots organisation formed and run by a dedicated group of village volunteers. The Gram Gaurav Sansthan has been working in 78 villages of the Dang region in Rajasthan. Its activities have focused on supporting the local community in efforts to augment water resources, scale up soil conservation, and enhance agricultural production. Since 2012, the project has impacted 1,760 families through the construction of over 400 structures. More than 730 hectares of land have assured irrigation and 116 hectares of wasteland is now under double cropping. There has also been significant yield enhancement in paddy, wheat, mustard, gram and millet. Around 900 women in the project area have been organised into 79 self-help groups (SHGs).



## ***Other major livelihood initiatives.***

Families in villages depend mostly on agriculture and livestock for their income. The Foundation has led several initiatives over the past two decades to improve livelihood of villagers across several states in India. These initiatives were different in nature based on the demographic needs.

### ***Barefoot Technicians***

For villagers, livestock is an important source of income. However, they are virtually defenseless against diseases which strike the livestock. Veterinarian treatment is often far beyond their means, and also difficult to access. An innovative project envisaged training Barefoot Technicians (Description) to treat the animals and poultry belonging to the villagers close to their home. Over a 15-day basic course, followed by a year in training, they were able to provide first aid, deworming, vaccinations, feeding management and general well being of the livestock. These 'kutti' doctors, given a stipend, helped in keeping the mortality rate low.

Initiated in 1995, the project continued till 2002 and was carried out in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Assam. The Foundation also supplied mobile veterinary clinics to supplement the services of the barefoot technicians in the states.



### ***Ginger Project***

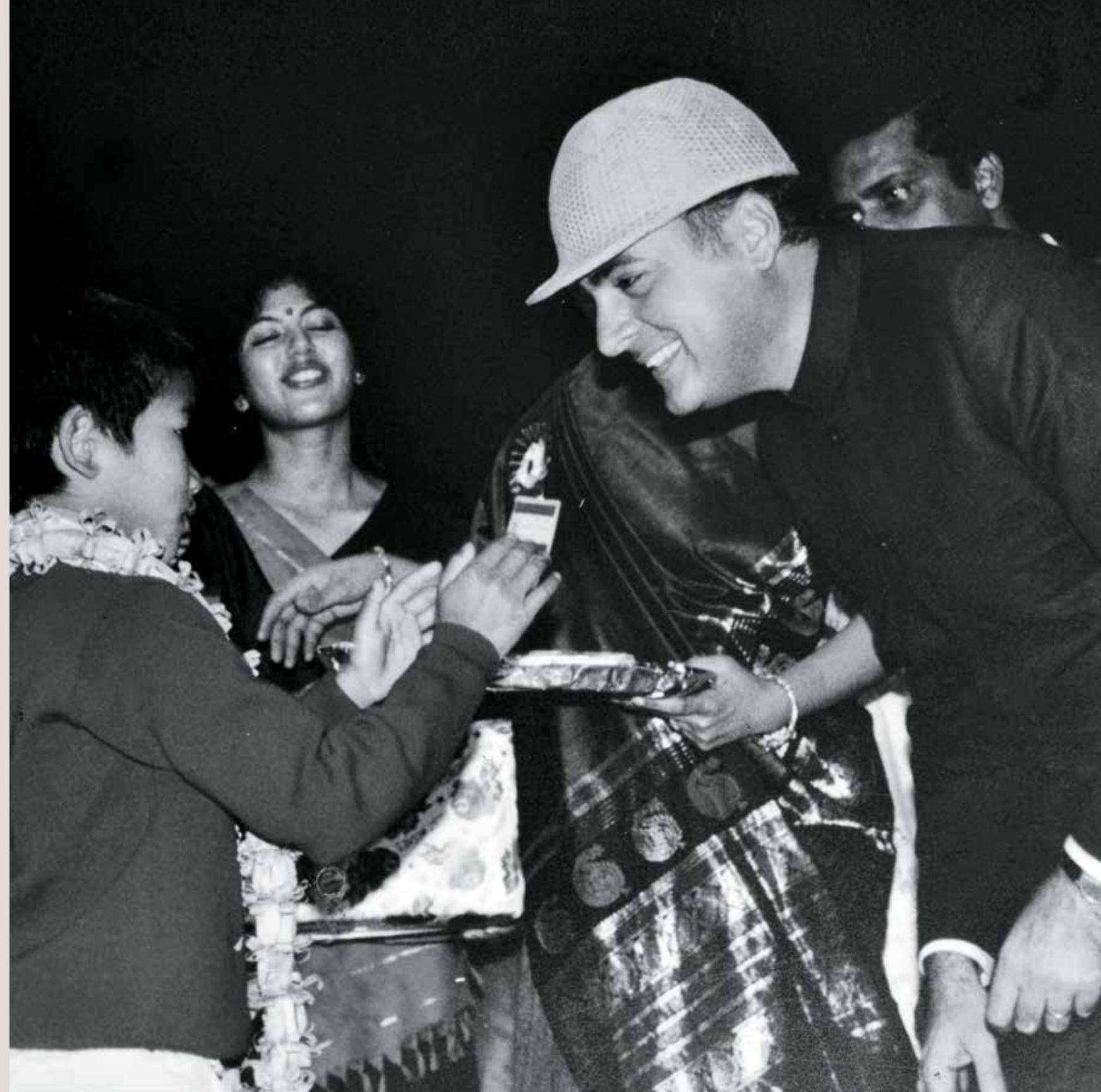
The Foundation started a project in Imphal, Manipur, in 2002 to train disadvantaged women in processing organic products. This made it possible for organic products to reach other states in good condition. A ginger processing plant was set up to produce crystallised ginger, ginger candy and ginger in brine. Financial aid was provided to local women to procure raw material. The Foundation also provided required machinery for the plant. It was setup based on the demographic need of the region. Around 50 women joined in the first year, and the years that followed saw a marked increase in numbers.

### ***Biomass Project***

One of the Foundation's more exciting efforts to support village life through alternative sources of energy was the use of biomass energy to meet power and irrigation requirements. The Foundation began this project in 1995 in Bengaluru. The experiment successfully promoted sustainable irrigation practices and agro processing for employment and development in two villages, Hosahalli and Hanumantanagar, in Karnataka. Biomass energy also met the electricity needs of these villages. The village community was trained to operate and manage the energy generating and energy utilisation systems. The Foundation also supported villagers with the installation of tube wells, water pumps, sprinklers, pipelines and control systems to make use of the increased and reliable electric supply.

*“Ours is a faith founded in the  
essential goodness of human nature”*

*- Rajiv Gandhi*



## 6. Providing effective and timely relief

*Over the past 25 years, natural calamities (earthquakes, floods etc.) and acts of violence (ethnic and communal violence) in India have resulted in large scale destruction leaving thousands of people vulnerable. The Foundation, since its inception has been responding swiftly and effectively to such moments of need. Major relief operations were undertaken during the earthquakes in Uttarkashi (1991) and Jammu and Kashmir (2005); floods in Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir (2014); and riots in Mumbai (1992) and Gujarat (2002).*

*During the riots of 1992, the Foundation collaborated with a number of voluntary agencies in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Munger and Kanpur to distribute tarpaulins, blankets, medicines and cooking utensils in the affected areas. During 2002 Gujarat riots, the Foundation launched an initiative in Ahmedabad to support children who have lost their parents in the violence. During the same year, psychosocial support was provided to families in Budgam district of Kashmir, one of the areas worst affected by militancy.*



### *Earthquake in Kashmir - 2005*

In October 2005, an earthquake devastated large parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The Foundation was among the first to rush relief material to the affected areas. In order to ensure effectiveness, a survey of immediate shelter, health and education needs was undertaken in around 100 villages, many of them remote.

The Foundation's team worked closely with partner organizations and volunteers to distribute 30,000 blankets and 1.5 tonnes of first aid medicines and essential food items to more than 50 villages. The Foundation also mobilized 17 tonnes of CGI sheets as roofing material for rebuilding homes.

Resuming schools was important not only for education but also to help children cope with their sense of loss. In line with this, the Foundation distributed school bags, stationery, toys and books to more than 2000 children in Baramulla district. In addition, a series of programmes for children blending creativity and trauma therapy were conducted with children in November 2005.





## ***Floods in Kashmir - 2014***

In 2014, severe floods created havoc in Kashmir leaving more than 6,00,000 stranded. Responding swiftly to the disaster, the Foundation set up 14 static and mobile RO plants in Anantnag and Srinagar districts that provided around 12000 litres of pure and safe drinking water per hour. Medical camps were organised in 40 villages of Srinagar, Bandipora, Baramulla and Anantnag districts to provide the much needed emergency and preventive healthcare services. The team of doctors and paramedics in these camps attended to more than 9,000 patients. The Foundation's volunteers reached out to around 5,000 families across five districts at their doorstep and provided relief material. This included dry ration and essential food supplies and other relief materials including blankets, tarpaulins, matchboxes and candles.



## ***The Tsunami - 2004***

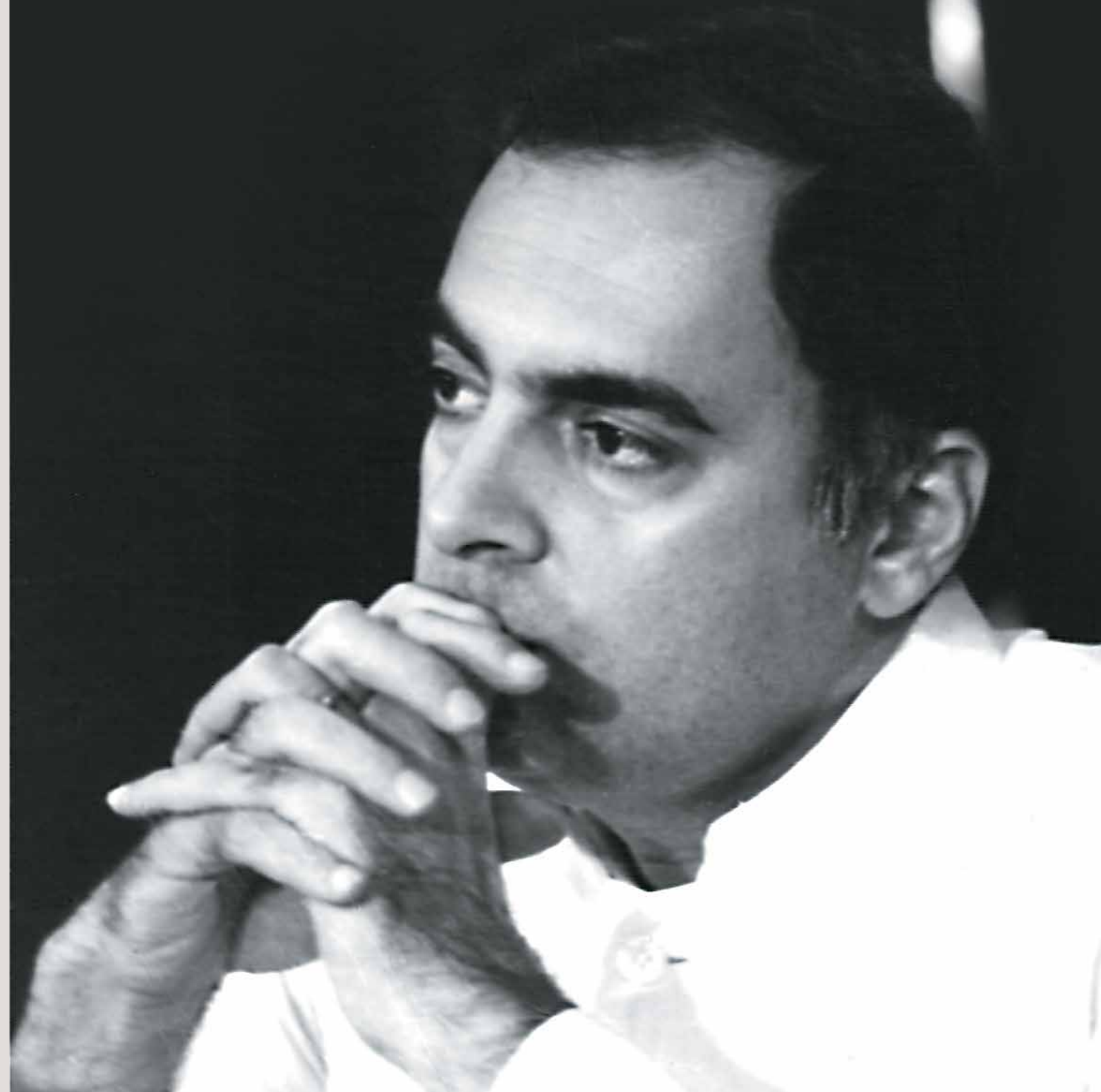
The tsunami in December 2004 caused massive loss of life and property in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and in coastal districts of Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Foundation supported the education of 140 orphaned children from the tribal communities of the southern group of islands, viz., Car Nicobar, Campbell Bay, Nancowrie, Kamorta, Katchal, Terressa and South Andamans. The Foundation also supported the education of 77 children in Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh. A distinguishing feature of the programme is that the children remained with their extended families and were not moved to orphanages.



*“Vision and statesmanship demand  
a cooperative approach and constructive  
measures to reduce and remove disparities  
and ensure a better life for all.”*

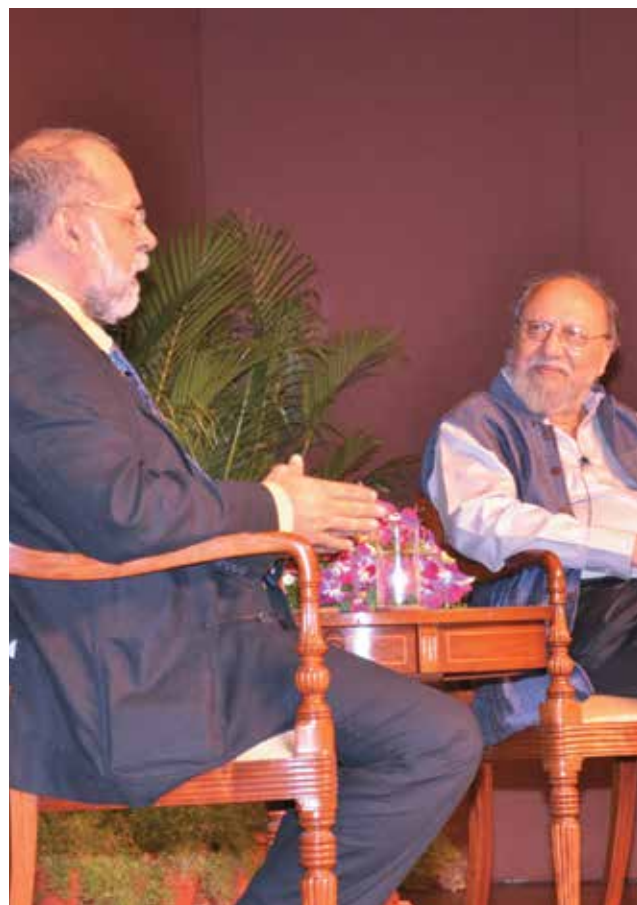
*- Rajiv Gandhi*



## 7. Shaping Public Policy

*The idea of establishing a progressive, independent, national policy think tank in India is the brainchild of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi. Established by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in August 1991, RGICS fulfills this vision of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi.*

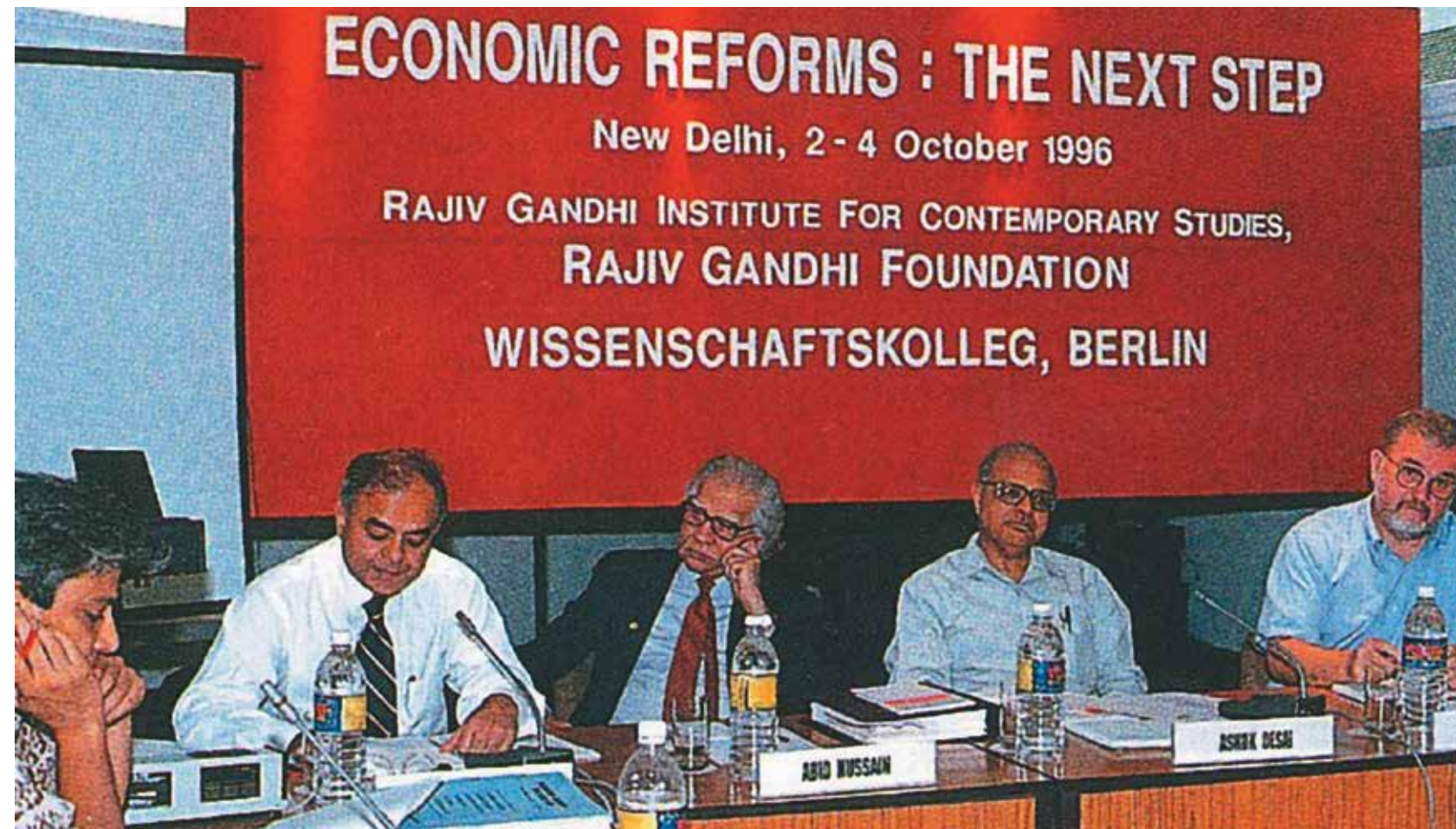
*The objective of RGICS is to generate ideas, policies and programmes on contemporary issues so as to catalyze egalitarian social, economic and political transformation in India as envisioned by Shri. Rajiv Gandhi. In the last quarter century, RGICS has emerged as India's leading progressive, social democratic think tank, making a significant impact in shaping public policy in areas of importance to the legacy of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi.*



## Issues

In the last quarter century, RGICS has engaged with virtually every significant contemporary national policy issue by undertaking its own research and analysis as well as organizing conferences, seminars and lectures that bring together experts, public officials, civil society and people's representatives, as well as stakeholders including labour and business. RGICS has organized over 500 significant knowledge events, and widely disseminated knowledge through dozens of books, monographs and papers as well as on its web-site.

RGICS has been strategically guided by specific focal themes set for it from time to time by its governing bodies. Cumulatively, reflecting changing contemporary realities, these evolving focal areas have included (1) international economic relations; (2) information technology; (3) economic reforms; (4) law reforms; (5) panchayati raj institutions; (6) resettlement and rehabilitation; (7) affirmative action; (8) threat of naxalism; (9) employment and employability; (10) regulatory reforms; (11) management and utilisation of water; (12) India's evolving social frameworks; (13) strengthening the capacity of agents of egalitarian social change including political activists and social activists; (14) democratising public policy decision making including enhancing public awareness of, and engagement with, policy formulation and development; and (15) developing public policy innovations and providing assistance for new policy development for marginalised groups that may lack requisite access to policy expertise.

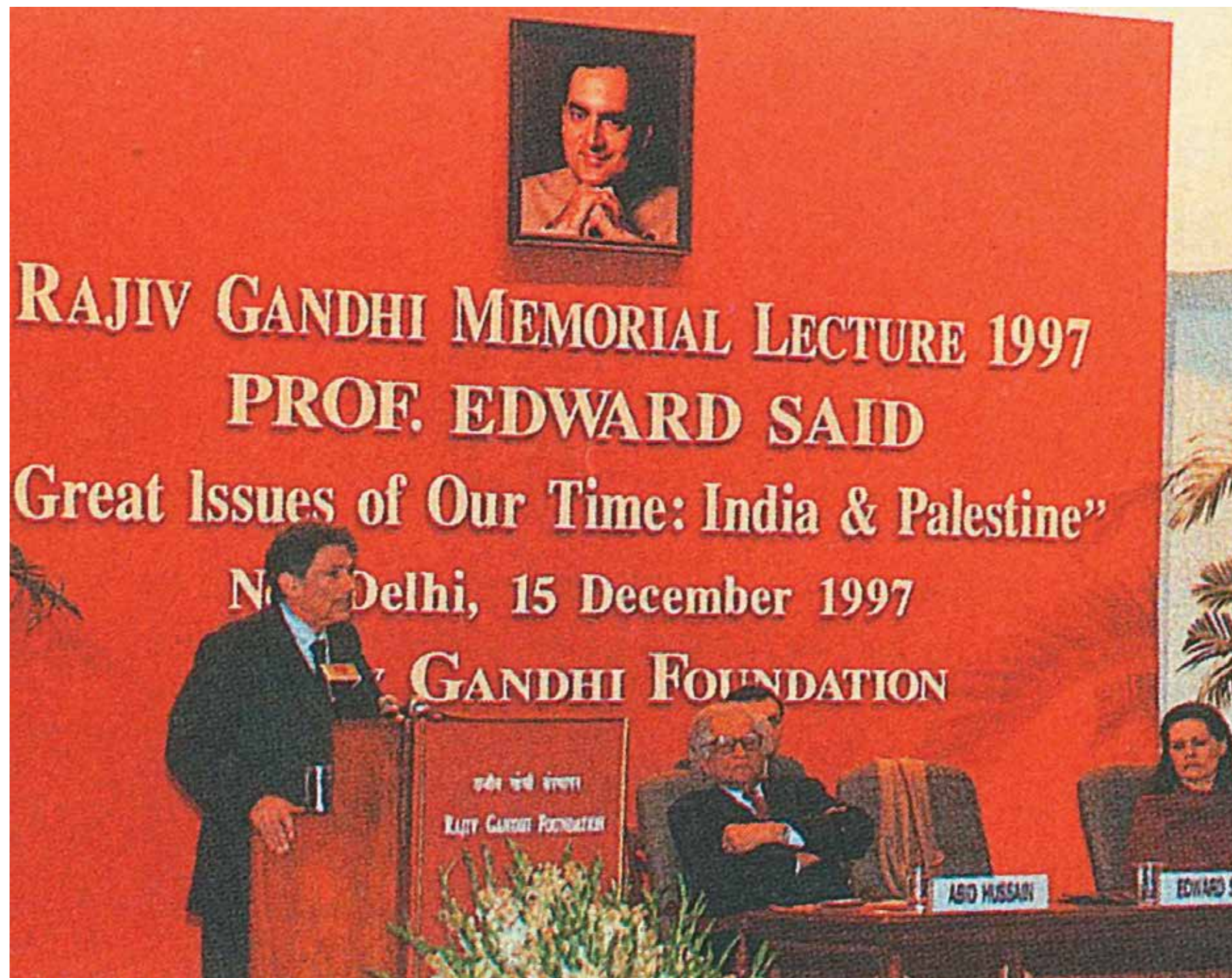


**Carrying forward these focal themes, in the last twenty-five years RGICS has conducted conferences, seminars and lectures, published papers or books and conducted special events on a very large range of specific contemporary policy issues on many of which RGICS's intervention has resulted in specific and measurable policy outcomes. These specific policies include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Political challenges such as decentralisation and devolution of power through panchayati raj (including through a landmark, high powered RGF “panchayati raj task force”, supported by RGICS that had a decisive impact on strengthening the implementation of the Constitutional provisions on panchayati raj); empowering women panchayati raj members; contemporary challenges facing the core ideas of the Republic such as democracy, freedom, equality, human rights and secularism; challenges to the Republic from communalism, casteism and religious nationalism; misuse of data on fertility rates to create communal divide; the intersection of politics and religion; freedom of the press and issues relating to media and broadcasting; conflict resolution and peace; evolving ideas of citizenship in the 21st century; reflections on the 50th anniversary of India's independence: and terrorism.
- Governance challenges including public sector reform, market regulation, combating corruption; modernising governance through use of technology; public sector administration; law and order; judicial and legal reform including access of justice for the poor.
- Development challenges including inclusive and equitable economic growth, the role of science and technology in development; globalisation; emergence of a global civil society; poverty eradication in India as well as in South Asia; public distribution systems; economic reforms and liberalisation, competition; foreign trade (international and bilateral); investment; foreign direct investment; financial sector development; WTO issues; industrial growth and development; agriculture and rural development; seeds policy; genetic diversity; processed fruits and vegetables industry; labour policies; migration; land reforms; land acquisition; land use planning; urbanisation; rural development; industrial growth; information technology policies; telecommunications issues; health policies including disability and mental health issues; population policy; development of India's north-east region; regionalism and regionally balanced development; the impact of development on marginalised communities; development of small and medium enterprises; trade in the electronic sector; policies for responding to the declining sex ratio in the country; poverty alleviation in India and in South Asia; child mortality, education; and civil aviation.
- Foreign policy and international relations issues (including India's contemporary strategic concerns; non-alignment; the changing world order and the world economy; India and developing countries; BRICS; bilateral relations between India and its neighbours; Asian countries; China; Africa; Europe; the Americas and USA; UN and other international

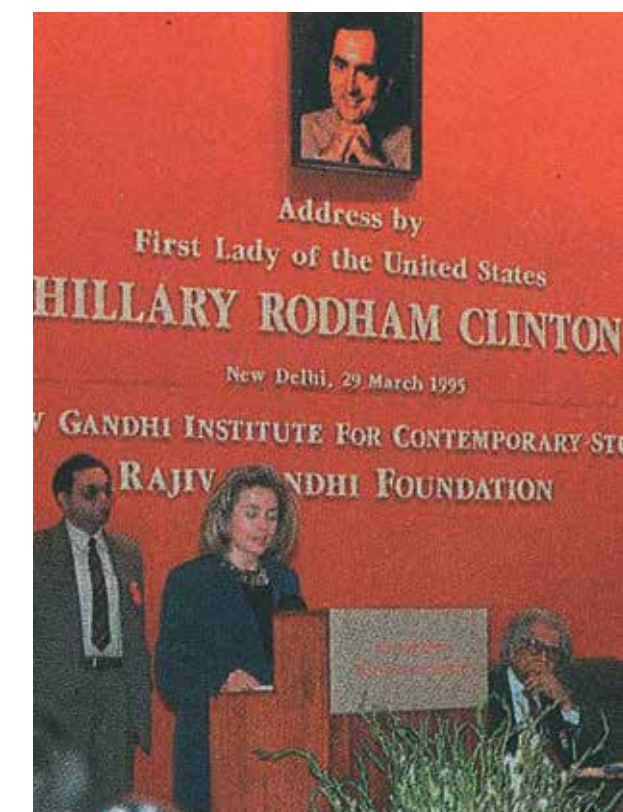
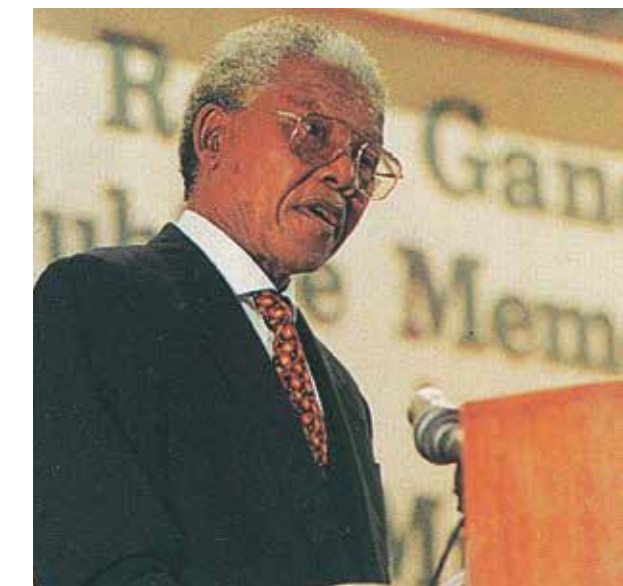
organisations including the World Bank; Regional blocs; Middle East/West Asia Conflict; South African Constitutional Development; India's Role in the Development of Asia-Pacific Economies; Israel-PLO Peace accord and its Implications for India; Globalisation and the Emergence of Global Civil Society; Global Security)

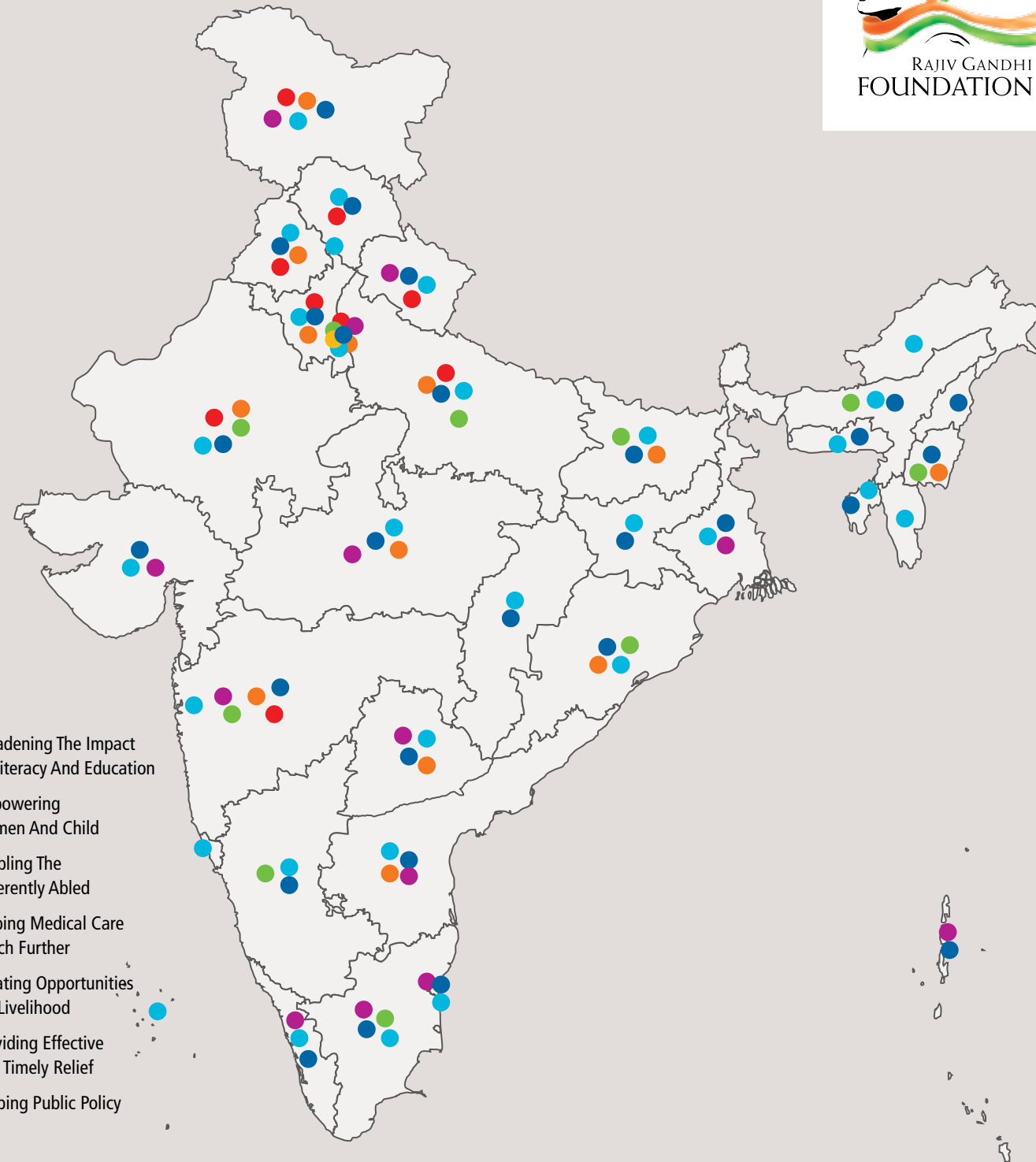
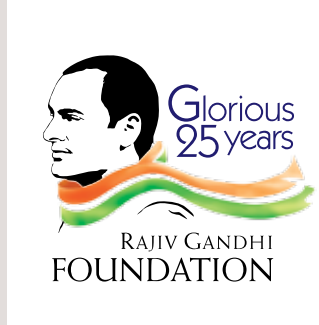
- Social policy (social justice; rights based approaches to social justice; dalit issues, gender equality, casteism and communalism, violence, tribal issues, modernity; juvenile justice; begging; manual scavenging; atrocities against SC/ST; surrogacy; domestic violence against women).
- Environmental, natural resources and wild life protection (including Climate change; Clean Water, Forest conservation; wildlife protection; environmentally sustainable development; environmental economics)
- Science and Technology was of central importance in Sri. Rajiv Gandhi's Vision. RGICS organised a series of “Rajiv Gandhi lectures on science and technology” in various parts of India. RGICS also engaged with use of science and technology for rural development as well as for enhancing competitiveness
- Supporting preparation of legislation: RGICS has supported important legislative initiatives with research, analysis and ideas including many legislative changes associated with economic reforms and implementation of the post-reform economic agenda; land acquisition laws; laws against corruption and for greater transparency and accountability; laws against SC/ST atrocities; laws prohibiting manual scavenging; laws to secure rights of SC/ST in reservations.
- Democratising preparation of election manifestos: Consistent with RGICS's focus on democratising public policy development, the Indian National Congress (INC) provided RGICS a unique opportunity to provide technical support to their unique 2014 initiative to develop the national manifesto of the INC through an extensive process of public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. This was an unparalleled exercise that was massive in scale, and was successful in INC being able to develop not only its national manifesto in a democratic and participatory manner, but also a series of “sub-manifestos” separately for each group. RGICS also organised “citizens forums” and “dialogue with MPs” events on public policy.
- Strengthening capacity of democratic voice in policy making: RGICS has carried out scores of briefing sessions on policy issues for Members of Parliament on policy issues. RGICS has also prepared and distributed over 500 policy and legislative briefs to MPs and political leaders, as well as civil society organisations on policy issues. RGICS has also organised briefings on policy for civil society organisations and peoples' movements.
- Over the past year RGICS has also supported I-Parliament, a student-led platform that offers an opportunity for young school students to participate in a model parliament, and helps them understand the workings of a parliamentary democracy.



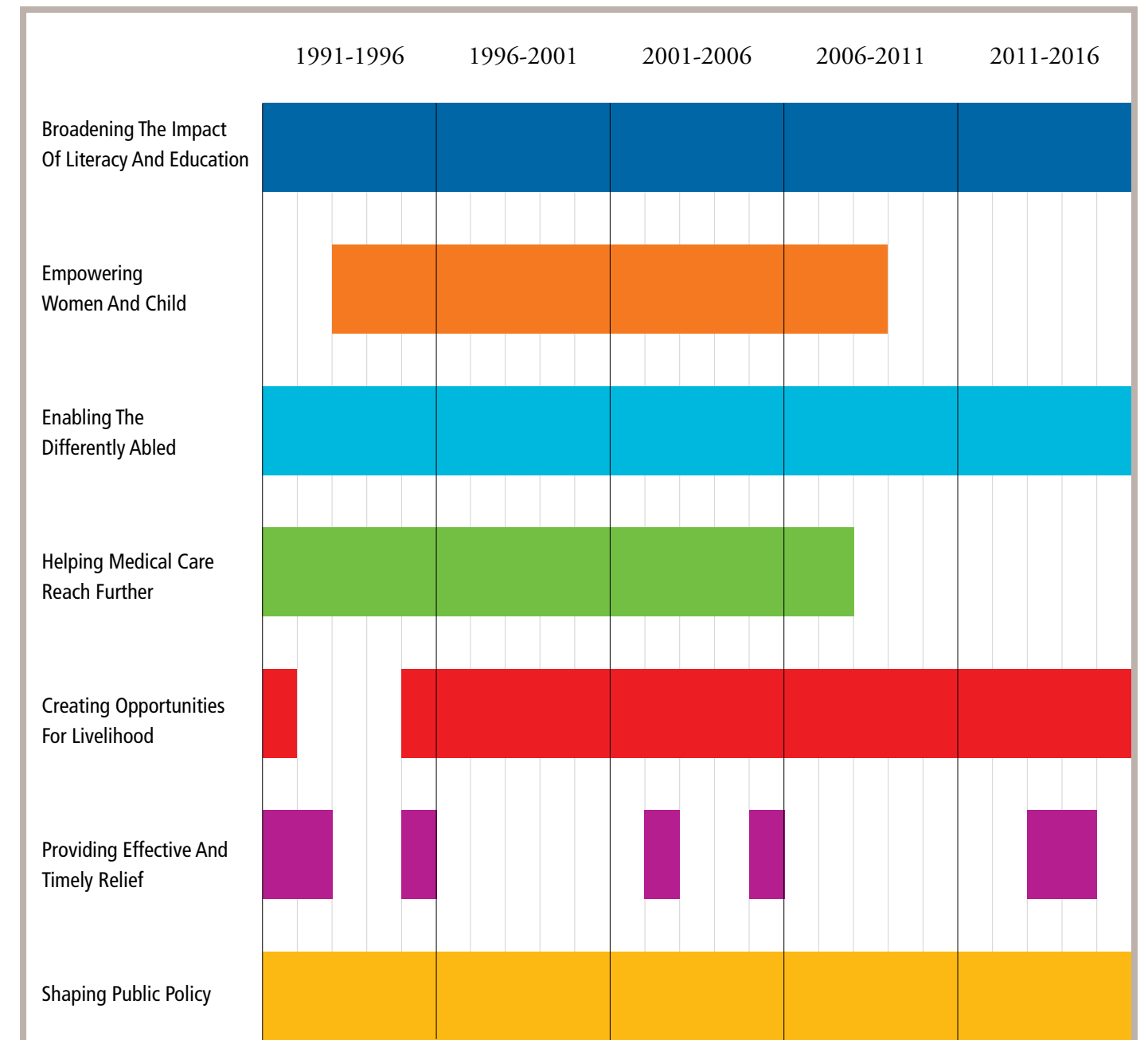
## *Audiences*

RGICS has engaged with a full range of audiences in the last quarter century including top political leaders and policy makers – local, regional, national and global; political activists at all levels, from the grass roots to senior leaders; public officials and the bureaucracy; academia; civil society – social and peoples’ movements; youth and students; and the general public. RGICS has attracted a wide range of distinguished staff over the years including as fellows, visiting fellows, and scholars – national and global. RGICS has also attracted a large number of young researchers, in particular as “Rajiv Gandhi Research Assistants to Legislators”, a unique programme to introduce young graduates to the challenges of public policy work. RGICS has also engaged with youth over the years through fellowship programmes, exchange programmes with universities, and through visits of students from other countries. RGICS has engaged policy makers in other countries through a series of policy dialogue conferences – the India-Sri Lanka; India-Bangladesh; India-Pakistan; and India-Iran dialogues.





## Our Journey - Every 5 Years





***Together we have, and we will.***

*Over the years the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has shown that it is possible to work with scarce resources to achieve very positive results. As a catalyst for change, the Foundation has continued to make a difference by extending a caring hand to some of the most needy sections of society.*

*This book is an effort to help you understand the Foundation better.*

*The Foundation's journey till now has been very enabling and successful. For this, it is important to thank members of the Foundation's family, and the continued financial support of individuals, corporates, and donor agencies that have shared our vision. All of them have helped take forward the Foundation's vision of an economically sound and just India.*

*There's so much more to do, and for that the Foundation needs financial resources. We request you to think with your heart, and donate generously to add more strength to our purpose. Because there are thousand more who need the right support, right now.*

*All donations to the Foundation are tax deductible to the extent of 50 percent under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. For further information on project sponsorship opportunities, or to share an idea on how you could support any aspect of our work, please call +91 11 23716450 or e-mail at [info@rgfindia.org](mailto:info@rgfindia.org).*

*Thank you!*



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