

SmS Chair's Report 2012-13

Highlights

I am proud to report that all our chosen projects both here and in India are making excellent progress, with 3 out of the 4 projects in India, receiving multiple awards for their manifold achievements. Thanks to your support, FY 2012 like FY 2011 has been a consequential year for SmS. The two main developments worth highlighting are:

- i) preparing the groundwork for Sahara-Support (SS) – our new local community service project in the form of a Bereavement Support Group under the leadership of our General Secretary, Mrs Neena Bedi and
- ii) adopting a new project in India under the umbrella of a Delhi based NGO 'The Earth Saviours Foundation' established in 2008 by Mr Ravi Kalra - a well known Karma Yogi, social activist and environmentalist. It meets all our objectives and is in dire need of financial and organizational support. The Foundation manages a varied portfolio of projects, including providing shelter to Homeless Senior Citizens, Rescue Centre for Mentally Disabled, Nari Niketan for the welfare of victims of rape and sexual abuse and education and food to the local street children. For various reasons we have opted to support the last project which is called 'Agamy School'.

Review of the Year

1. Promoting Health & Fitness in the local Community:

- i) **Yoga classes**, providing a steady stream of revenue, are continuing in full swing.
- ii) **Ayurveda Workshops with prime focus on preventative healthcare are gaining momentum:**
 - On **Thurs 6th Sep** 2012, SmS conducted a very successful and well-attended Ayurveda Workshop under the leadership of BAAAP's Chair Dr Indira Anand at the the **Arya Samaj Day Centre** in the Grand Union Community Hall, Northolt.
 - On **Sun 8th July** 2012, SmS conducted a similar workshop under the leadership of BAAAP's Vice –Chair, Dr Dana Urban, at the **Sri Swami Madhavanandaji Ashram** in Queens Park, London.

The main objective of such workshops is to educate the participants on the need to tailor their Diet and Lifestyle according to their constitution.

2. Progress at our chosen Charitable Projects in India:

- i) **Pardada Pardadi Educational Society or PPES** is growing from strength to strength. Enrolment at the **Vocational School in Anupshehar, Uttarakhand** increased from **1100 to 1200** girls this year. Before the inception of PPES in the year 2000, no girl in Anupshehar had ever been to school. Last year PPES embarked on two new ambitious projects- **Self Help Group (SHG) for women** and **Rural Call centre**. The SHG initiative, launched in April 2012, is aimed at mobilising and training

village people towards self – sustenance, utilising local resources. Under this initiative, over 1200 women in 32 villages have organized themselves into 80 groups. The **Rural Call centre** initiative was launched in December 2012 providing employment opportunities to local girls, where there were none before. Commercial operation of the call centre started in June 2013. Currently, 6 trained girls are earning Rs.5000 per month, which is more than their parents ever made in a full year. Another 2 to 3 girls will be joining the trained workforce every month. On the basis of their competencies, these girls could easily progress to earning up to Rs 15,000 per month. Both projects have received enthusiastic response from the local girls and women.

As part of PPES's efforts at empowering girls in rural India, a new '**Health Centre**' was established at the school in October 2012 which aims to provide training and total health care for their girls.

At the beginning of this year, PPES received several coveted awards in the social sector and also got featured in prominent magazines.

Rays of Hope Award initiated by the Earth Foundation, recognizes individuals who have done outstanding work in the field of girl child's empowerment through education.

PPES was featured in **Tehelka's 'The Power of Inspiration Series'** 2012. The article '**Investing in the Girl Child**' talks about Journey undertaken by PPES in making education a reality for thousands of rural girls.

India Perspective, Min of External Affairs publication, featured PPES in its **Path breakers** series.

The **Textile Association of India** conferred the '**Lifetime Achievement Award**' on PPES Founder and Visionary **Mr. V. Sam Singh**.

For more details of PPES's amazing efforts please visit their web:

www.education4change.org.

- ii) **Akshay Pratishthan:** According to its Founder & Principal, Mrs Aruna Dalmia, "*Akshay Pratishthan has been a dream coming true every year.*" Amongst their various other impressive activities, Akshaya Prati presented a Crafts Bazaar, with all the work done by its school-children, on 7th Feb 2013 at the British High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi. It also sponsored 50% expenditure for the Foundation Course on Certificate Education Programme for 15 teachers at Indira Gandhi National Open University. For more details visit their website: www.akshaypratishthan.org
- iii) **Action for Autism (AFA)** has now launched its most ambitious project called 'ANANDA' - group homes to provide 'Supported Living for Adults with Autism'. ANANDA will help adults with autism lead a productive and dignified future. To date most services for autism in India as well as across the world are focused on younger people. Very few services look at adults and the aging population of individuals with autism. Also preparations are underway to organise an overnight respite for children with Autism, offering their parents the opportunity to have a break. For AFA's recent achievements please see the section on AFA or visit: www.autism-india.org.
- iv) **Vatsalya Vatika, Haridwar:** As mentioned last year, we are currently trying to address the most urgent need of this NGO viz., lack of adequate accommodation for the existing children and therefore their inability, despite strong demand, to accept any new comers.

Our financial aid for the last three years, and again this year, has been targeted at meeting this requirement. Construction of the new three-storey building is in full swing and should be completed shortly.

I sincerely hope that with your ongoing financial and moral support, SmS would continue to undertake more challenges in serving the underprivileged and needy both here and in India.

Dr Indira Anand