



ANNUAL REPORT

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“...I’ll never forget the People who guided me from Darkness to Light..!”

“...As a 7 year old child, I knew this much; I’m not going to see my mother again in my life because I saw her being burnt down to ashes during her cremation...”

An expression of gratitude from a child

It was about 13 years ago I got a new home. I was hardly 5 years old. Till then all the family I had was my mother. I don’t have the slightest memory of my father. My mother was a vendor in Gorakhpur railway station. Mother and I lived in the railway station premises.

I have only vague memories of the day I came to Apna Ghar. All I can remember is that one day my mother took me with her to see a tall man who had a big home near the Gorakhpur railway station. From that day on it became my home too and the tall man, my Ravi Papa.

Papa took me to his village home in Pharsar, which was 50 kms from the city. There wasn’t much struggle for me to adapt to the new environment as there were many other kids like me. Gradually they became my family, brothers and sisters from different mothers. Since my mother was in Gorakhpur, she could not come and see me very often in Pharsar. But she used pay a visit once in a while.

On my 7th birthday celebrations, she visited me. She looked very weak and tired. I saw Papa mildly scolding her for not informing him about her condition any sooner. He asked her to stay at Pharsar for a medical check-up. But she left in the morning, next day; perhaps she didn’t want to give Papa anymore burden. However she came back again after a month. This time, she looked weaker than ever. Her dress and body were stinking. She struggled even to stand. It seemed like she was in severe pain. Papa took her to a hospital in the city. When they came back neither my mother nor Papa told me anything about her illness. But I was very happy to hear that my mother would be staying with me from that day onwards. For the convenience of treatment she was transferred to the Gorakhpur house. I was also sent to Gorakhpur a few days later to stay with her. I continued my studies there.

Mother’s condition was getting weaker each day. She was undergoing treatments but there was not much improvement in her condition. After 10 months of treatment and care she left me forever, putting me under Papa’s care. It was only after her death I came to know that she had cancer. She was in the last stage of cancer when she informed Papa about it.

“...I always saw hope for me in Papa’s eyes while I had none. He waited patiently until I could get a grip on myself. And, yes, finally I was back in my spirits again...”

I did not understand what death really meant back then. But I knew this much, I’m not going to see her anymore because I saw her being burnt down to ashes during her burial. Now all I had left was Papa and my Apna Ghar family.

From that day onwards I became closer to Papa. His love and affection helped to heal from the loss of my mother. I was doing well in studies. I wanted to learn English. Seeing my interest, Papa decided to send me to the Lucknow home for better education in City Montessori School.

I seldom had mood swings which would put my spirits off for some period. I got bored of studies in the beginning of my teen years. It was then my interests turned to cricket. I was attracted to the fame and acceptance received by a cricketer from the people. I wanted to become a cricketer. When Papa came to know about it he agreed to enroll me into a cricket academy. He bought a cricket kit and made all the necessary arrangements for me. But within one year I realized that cricket was not my thing. I had no idea how Papa would react to this as he did everything I asked for a cricket career. To my surprise he was very patient with me and asked me to continue my studies.

My interest in studies was long gone. I was struggling in academics. I did not know what to do with my life. But then, Papa motivated me. He never lost hope in me. His encouragement helped me to regain my focus and as a result I completed my ‘O’ levels.

By that time I became much interested in computers. I became a fan of animated and graphic intense movies. I decided to do animation course instead of ‘A’ levels. But I was doubtful whether Papa would agree to it or not. One reason for it was that I had already left the cricket coaching in the middle although Papa did all what I asked for. Second reason was that animation courses were comparatively expensive than any other course. When I told Papa about my intentions he asked me whether I was sure about it. I said yes. Seeing my confidence, he was convinced. He got me admitted in the best animation academy in Gorakhpur. He gave me his laptop so that I could practice at home.

I completed my course well. While doing job hunt, I realized how hard it is for a fresher to get a job. Then again, Papa was here to support and motivate me. When I got the joining letter, after the interview, from a reputed animation studio in Pune, I felt Papa was happier than me. He came to Pune with me, talked to my boss, arranged accommodation for me and stayed with me till next day until finally he was convinced that I had everything I needed.

“...I’m sure, in another world somewhere, my mother would be so proud of me and of her decision to put her trust in Papa...”

Today I’m working as a 3D modeler; I have begun the journey to my goal- the goal to find my own place among the legends in world of animation. When I saw the joy on Papa’s face during our stay in Pune, I wished my mother were here too to see how far her son advanced from the life on street to a secure future. My well-being was her dying wish. Even in her last breath, lying in Papa’s arms, she asked him to take good care of me. He had gone far too long than just taking care of me. I’m sure, in another world somewhere, my mother would be so proud of me and of her decision to put her trust in Papa.

Every time I tried to thank Papa, he would stop me from doing so saying that he was only a medium. He often says that all we have and all we are, is the sweat and blood of many kind hearts around the globe. You will always be remembered in our hearts for helping us to fulfill our dreams and giving us hope. I thank all of you on behalf of my brothers and sisters of the COME family.

-Nishit Manas



Letter from the Founder

“...we celebrated our 11 years of collaboration with the Indian Railway in the year 2015...”

Dear friends,

Greetings from Children of Mother Earth!

When I left Singapore in 1998 to start an organization in India, my plans were small. “Children of Mother Earth (COME)” started as a small organization in my ancestral home in Pharsar village of Uttar Pradesh state. It was a humble beginning with 7 children initially. Never even in my wildest dreams I imagined that COME would expand over two states, set up three more centers and help over 2500 children. It was all made possible only through the selfless support by the kind hearts like you who stood by us in the thick and thin.

This year was the 17th year of our operations in India and the 11th year of our collaboration with the Indian Railway. We are grateful to Mr. Manoj Sinha, Honourable Minister of State for Railways, who inaugurated the function organized by COME to celebrate the 11th anniversary of the collaboration with the Indian Railways. He extended all his support in helping the children in contact with the Railways all over India. COME joined hands with Railways in the year 2004 to establish a center for the children on the streets and living around the railway station. Railways provided us with spacious locations near the railway stations of Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Delhi Shahdara to setup centers for the underprivileged children.

We are constantly trying to improve and expand our works for the disadvantaged children of India. We are glad to inform that with your generous support, 14 children undergo higher studies at present. The courses include Degree in Engineering (2 children), Diploma in Civil Engineering (8 children), BSc. Ophthalmology (1 child), BSc. Nursing (1 child) and B.A (2 children). We have important projects at our hand which can bring great changes in the lives of many more children. Establishing a full-fledged school for the underprivileged children, starting a vocational center for the poor children from the villages and setting up kiosks for the children in contact with the railways at the major railway stations of India, are few among the envisioned projects which needs immediate implementation.

We seek continued support from every one of our well-wishers to improve the lives and add color to the dreams of the children in need. COME extends its heartfelt gratitude to all its supports who helped us to put smile back on the little faces we found in the slums, streets and villages.

Without YOU this was not possible!

Lots of love from the children & Ravi

“...243 children were restored from April 2015 to March 2016...”

Restoration Program: Re-uniting the Children

The objective of Our Child Restoration Program is to reunite as many vagrant or runaway children as possible with their families.

No child ends up on the streets out of choice, situations force them to. Children run away from homes due to the insecurities and adversities at their homes such as broken families, different kinds of abuses, pressure from family members and often as the result of child-trafficking which is a huge problem in India.

COME has outreach staffs in both its centres- New Delhi and Gorakhpur. Every day the outreach staffs go to the streets and railway stations to rescue the runaway or trafficked children and bring them to our restoration centres. Children wandering in the railway stations are also handed over to COME by the Railway Protection Force (RPF). Our counsellors will provide them with counselling, enquire them about their details and convince them to return to their homes through the Child Welfare Committee.

Our counsellors and outreach staff coordinate their efforts with the close co-operation of local police authorities and the child welfare committee. When a run-away child or vagrant child is contacted it is reported to the railway authorities (if contacted within railway premises) and the local police officials. The child is then produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in



the respective cities. Contact is made by COME to the respective district police headquarters of each child who then contact the local police authorities in the child's village. The child's family is then traced and contacted with the help of the Village Pradhan (Panchayat President). COME then transfer the child to a shelter home provided by the CWC until the parent or the guardian arrives to receive the child.

We are happy to say that a total of 243 children were restored from the Gorakhpur and Shahdara centres during this financial year. This would account to a total of 2015 children restored till date.

“...This will make the total number of restored children so far by the organization to 2051...”



Progress of Our Works

Rainbow Program: The Residential Academy

“...underprivileged children are provided with free education and residential facilities with love and care...”

The Rainbow Program is implemented in all the three centres of COME.

Rainbow Program intends to empower children living in difficult circumstances to live a dignified life and to become a role model for other children living in difficult circumstances mainly by providing them with quality education.

Children from economically weak families and street children are deprived of education, health and a caring home atmosphere. This program ensures that these children are given enabling environment, proper care, security, have access to education, health and other basic services as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and as per declaration of UN Convention on Child Rights to which India is a signatory. Under Rainbow programme we have set up ‘COME Academy’ which provides academic education, computer education and vocational training for children who cannot afford education.

It provides boarding facility for children living in difficult circumstances.

During the past five years 52 children have completed 10th (‘O’ Level) from our organization. One of our children recently completed Diploma in Animation and is currently working with a reputed animation studio in Pune. We have 25 children who have completed vocational training and working in the construction projects of



Mr. J P Batra (Ex-chairman, Railway Board) congratulates the young professionals

reputed companies in different parts of India.

14 children undergo higher studies at present. The courses include Degree in Engineering (2 children), Diploma in Civil Engineering (8 children), BSc. Ophthalmology (1 child), BSc. Nursing (1 child) and B.A (2 children).

“...the continuous efforts have paid off and 50 children under the Bridge-schooling Program are admitted in the mainstream schools this year from both our centers in Delhi and Lucknow...”

Bridge Schooling

Bridge-schooling projects are mainly aimed at the children in the slums of Delhi, Lucknow and Gorakhpur. Slums possess one of the most vulnerable environments for a child to grow in. The parents put their children straight into work or begging. The parents and, as a consequence, the children see no point in gaining education. Large numbers of children in the slums have never even attended any school.

COME plays an active role in the education of the children from the slums by providing Bridge-schooling (non-formal education and functional literacy). These children grow up in the worst environment, exposed to all kinds of vulgarities due to which their behavior is nowhere par to the socially accepted norms. Mere formal education is not enough to integrate them to the mainstream society. The bridge-schooling introduces them to the whole concept of adapting to socially acceptable behaviors, paying attention, learning, growing, and determination for a positive future.



Children, who are not from slums but haven't attended any school, are also put through the bridge-schooling after they are admitted to COME. Through bridge-schooling and counseling (the children as well as their families), COME enables the children to join the main-stream school system smoothly, in a short period of time.

Moreover, COME put a great deal of pressure and effort to overcome problems like the reluctance of mainstream schools in admitting these children and the problems to cope up with the school system. The bridge-schooling includes providing text books and education materials, school uniforms, shoes and socks, bags and other basic materials needed at the time of enrollment to mainstream schools.

We are very proud to say that this year we were able to enroll 50 students from our Bridge Schooling Program in Delhi and Lucknow, to mainstream

schools. It was never an easy task for our teachers to train them, discipline them and make them competent enough to study with other children in the reputed schools.

Major Achievements

“...16 children appeared for the 10th Board Exams out of which 14 came through with flying colors. 3 children appeared for the 12th Board Exams and all of them passed...”

Commendable Success In The Board Exams

The results of the Board exams in ‘O’ levels (Year 10) and ‘A’ levels (Year 12) made us proud this year too. 16 of our children passed with flying colours in the exams. It was indeed a moment of great joy not only for the ones who passed but for the whole family and supporters. One can hardly imagine the adversities they had to go through to reach so far.

19 children appeared for the Board exams this year in which 16 were for the ‘O’ levels and 3 for the ‘A’ levels. Among the 16 appeared for the ‘O’ levels 9 were boys and 7 were girls.

14 children made through the ‘O’ levels and obtained eligibility for ‘A’ levels. All the three passed the ‘A’ levels and are preparing for higher studies.

Award by CIDC in Delhi

It was a proud moment for COME as our founder Mr. Ravi Rai was awarded the ‘Chairman Commendation Trophy’ by Constuction Industry

Development Council (CIDC). CIDC is an umbrella organization by the Government of India for the construction industry in India and have a national presence with branches across the country.



“...The award was for the notable achievement and work done by COME to impart skills development and training to rural youth leading to better livelihood...”

They undertake a wide range of activities to benefit the construction industry. This includes conducting training at various levels, organizing

workshops and conferences, publishing journals and newsletters, welfare programmes for construction workers, grading, placement and so on.

The award was given away by Dr. P S Rana, the chairman of CIDC at an award ceremony conducted at India Habitat Center in New Delhi on 7th March, 2016. The award was for the notable achievement and work done by COME to impart skills development and training to rural youth leading to better livelihood.

Major Events

11th Anniversary of Collaboration with the Indian Railway

COME celebrated its 11 years of collaboration with the Indian Railways, on 13th November, 2015, on the eve of Children's Day. An exhibition was organized as a token of gratitude for the help and support provided by Indian Railways over the years. The theme of the exhibition was "Our duty & responsibility towards children living in difficult circumstances". The exhibition was held at the Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg, New Delhi and was inaugurated by Shri. Manoj Sinha, Hon. Minister of State for Railways. The function was attended by many other dignitaries including our patron Mr. JP Batra, Ex-Chairman of Railway Board, Mr. Dwadash Shreni, General Manager of NER Headquarters, Gorakhpur and Dr. PR Swaroop, Director General of CIDC, New Delhi.



Shri. Manoj Sinha, Hon. Minister of State for Railways, addresses the audience



Mr. Ravi Rai Manas giving the welcome speech



Children of COME performing cultural programs

Special Guests Call At Delhi Apna Ghar

They were always a part of the Apna Ghar family since COME was in her toddler stage and still remains to be the reliable hands to hold on to. They are none other than our special guests Mr. Deepak Sharma and his generous daughter Ms. Priyanka Sharma, from Singapore. It was their fourth visit to Apna Ghar Delhi. They are always keen to be with the Apna Ghar family and finds happiness in spending time with the children and the staffs every time they visit. The joy was doubled as it was Jithender's birthday on the very same day.



The visit by our friends called for a grand celebration. There was cake cutting, dancing, singing and fun of all sorts, the day was mesmerizing for everyone. Our friends brought with them gifts for everyone which was distributed among them. Before our friends returned, they once again asserted their unending support in the days ahead.

Awareness programs on Child Rights Protection

COME is a strong advocate of the Juvenile Justice Act. We have been conducting advocacy programs on child rights since its beginning. We hold workshops on the child-welfare for police officers and district administrative officers dealing with children in need as well as for cultivating public awareness. Workshops with the Railway Protection Force were also

conducted. Leaflets, posters and banners are displayed in train coaches to help children who are in and around the railway stations.

This year we extended our advocacy program to five more villages in Gorakhpur district. Our staff visited and conducted awareness workshops about child rights and good parenting in the remote villages such as Amahakpur, Berhata, Dharmasen, Garhee and Bheete.

Raksha Bandhan Celebration, Gorakhpur

Man without love is man without life. Everyone longs for love, care and affection, everyone longs for a sense of belonging. That's why we, in Apna Ghar, consider this day as most holy and sacred. We always try to impart in the minds of our children a sense of belongingness. Even the name Apna Ghar was chosen for our academy with that purpose. The daily life and routines in Apna Ghar is designed so as to promote fraternity and unity among our children. Raksha Bandhan is a wonderful occasion for them to express their love and care.



Early in the morning, sisters from Lucknow academy came to Gorakhpur with Rakhis for their brothers. For many children who have no sisters or a family of their own, it was a dream come true moment as the girls tied the Rakhis around their wrists. The brothers gave their sisters gifts such as cards, money or something thoughtful they made by themselves. The brothers may also feed their sisters with sweets, dry fruits and other seasonal delicacies.



Independence Day Celebration, Lucknow

As the nation celebrated her 69th year of independence, so did us in Apna Ghar, Lucknow. It was a moment of pride and joy about the rich heritage that we too are a part of. The day was sacred as well, as the blood of a freedom fighter runs in the veins of our founder Mr. Ravi Rai. His father Late Ram Awadh Rai served as a lieutenant in “Azad Hind Fauz” founded in Singapore by the legendary Subash Chandra Bose.



This day was special for us as we had among us two special guests, Mr. Ashwani Kumar Srivastava, Commercial Manager, Lucknow division and Mr. Sumil Kumar, Senior Divisional Engineer, to celebrate our nation's independence with us.

In the morning the children mustered in front of Apna Ghar for the flag hosting ceremony.

Mr. Mr. Ashwani Kumar Srivastava hosted the national flag and everyone paid homage to our

nation and the brave souls fought for her independence. Followed by it there was a meeting in which Mr. Mr. Sumil Kumar addressed the children and gave Independence Day message.

The children enchanted our guests with their performances after the official meeting. The program ended with a fabulous dine.

