

“ That time has now arrived, my beloved country of ages past,  
that finds me instantly alone in blissful union.  
I walk in bright light; why shall I look for the sun?  
I breathe only fragrance; why search for the flower?  
I hear the sweetest melody; why shall I seek the singer?  
And if I looked and listened, and searched and sought, would I find them THERE?  
How could I, when they are HERE, where I am, in me, AS ME... ”

Dwaraknath Reddy

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harvest of love

harvest of love

Dwaraknath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust



“ Appa is my inspiration by being who he is;  
he does not have to teach, he is the teaching.”

*anita reddy*





BHAGAVAN RAMANA MAHARSHI

“ The perfect one, whoever he is, is not known by outward signs. He is ever natural, and sees naturalness alone everywhere. To those who have misunderstood themselves to be cripples, he will reveal the potent power of their own limbs. He tempts us with crutches only to make us walk on our legs. He rids us of our self imposed defeatism.

He is compassion personified. His love generates love, fosters a sense of identity. That is why many feel an enraptured impulse to follow in his footprints.

There comes the enigma of the guru. His smile says, *"Like a bird on its wings, I leave no footprints."* Then he disappears. He blesses us with direction, momentum, purpose. The last steps have to be our own.

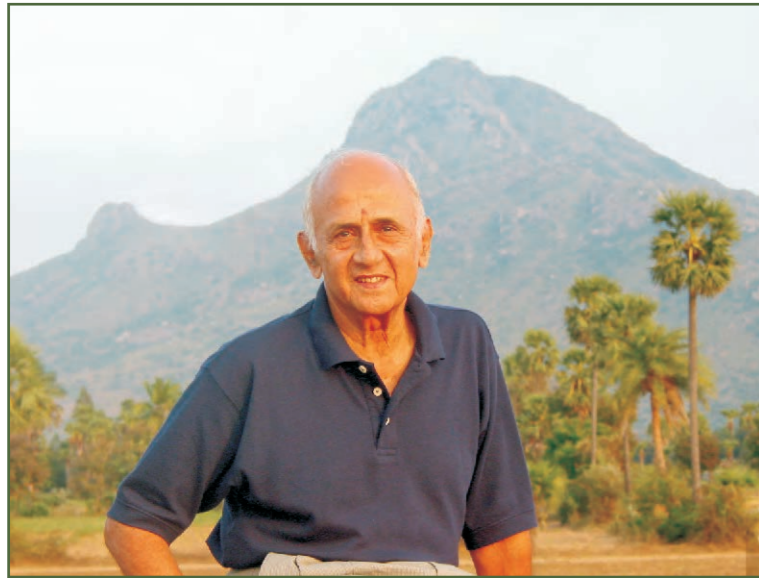
”  
Dwaraknath Reddy

## harvest of love

Dwaraknath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust  
1996 - 2006

A decade of service and support to the poor, to the marginalized and the oppressed, the landless and the homeless, in villages and slums.

Edited by Uma Swamy



Dwaraknath Reddy at the holy hill,  
Arunachala, in Tiruvanamalai.



“ In the silent depths of the ocean flow  
Mighty currents unseen,  
In the truth of this moment lie  
All the ages that have been. ”

DWARAKNATH REDDY



## contents

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## GENESIS

In the milling sea of humanity, there are but a few who are able to turn a family owned confectionary business into a nationally acclaimed company, and a household name, within the short span of a life-time. There are even fewer, who after scaling heights of success, choose to give it all up to tread the path of serving humanity.

What is it that makes them give up comforts known only to a chosen few and embrace the suffering of others? What is it that compels them to bond with people they never met before and strive to free them from suffering and disease? What makes them want to enthuse a person who has lost the will to survive with dreams of a better tomorrow?

This book attempts to answer these and other questions. It attempts to chronicle some of the experiences in the lives of the poor, in whose life Dwaraknath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust (DRRT) came as a turning point if not a miracle. These changes did not happen overnight. A seed sown by Dwaraknath Reddy grew over ten years, spreading its branches to become the tree of life. A tree, nurtured with the sweat and toil of Anita Reddy, his daughter, who was blessed with the mandate to manage DRRT, and others in the DRRT team who felt privileged to be actively involved in it.

The tree is still growing, and growing strong.

It was as if Dwaraknath Reddy, Appa to those whose lives he had enriched, was handpicked by destiny, to be the turning point in the lives of people, stricken by suffering, disease and neglect. By establishing DRRT, Dwaraknath Reddy was able to get the means to support people, to create employment opportunities for them, to enable their children access education, and to live a life of dignity and health.

This book, in some ways, tries to capture the spirit and impact of the work done by DRRT and represents the sentiments of those whose lives took on a new meaning after DRRT entered their lives.

This book is an expression of tribute by Anita Reddy to her father and her gratitude towards well-wishers and supporters, without whom this journey would not have been as enriching.

The DRRT family humbly dedicates this book to Appa, and all the values he lives for.

Uma Swamy





## IN THE WORDS OF DWARAKNATH REDDY

"I know too well the face of Death. He has been a frequent visitor to this family. He came calling for those I said were too young, and He came to clasp those I said were not too old. I have remained the survivor, but the first visitation that startled my youthful complacency was reminder enough my turn will come. There was no despair, only an awakening.

The law of life includes death. Law means justice, equal and consistent, always and for all. I should never again be caught confused and victimized, frightened and helpless. I must be consciously aware of the laws that govern creation and I must harmonize with them.

That resolve stayed with me. Self enquiry was my inner life and it became my strength and support. Outwardly, my work was laid out. I had to fill the gaps left by the departed, care for the young, build up a nascent family-owned industrial enterprise, earn and provide. Success came. Wealth grew. At the same time, my quest after ultimate values endowed me with detachment and peace inwardly, and dynamism outwardly.



Thus in 1983, when the younger generation seemed equipped to take over the management of factory and family, I quietly sought retreat near Arunachala, at Tiruvanmalai. The great sage, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, had spent most of His life there. His words filled my being and my longing; He was to me the indisputable proof and fulfillment of the wisdom and the promise of all scriptures. Therefore, a home near Ramanashramam was my natural destination. Staying alone and without any involvement, I arrived at an age of early eighties. Growth of business had enhanced the value of my 'residual wealth', the share left as mine, after I had done my duty towards members of the family. All of them were reasonably prosperous. I saw no merit, no righteousness, in bequeathing my share again to sons and daughters and grandchildren as a matter of course; instead, I sought to give it the status of a virtuous tradition. It belonged to Bharath, my country, in which millions lived in poverty. An uncaring society negligently denied them support to live with dignity. Willing hands could find no work, willing minds had no access to education, healthy bodies turned feeble through starvation and insanitation, and the sick had nowhere to turn to. Introspection showed me that nature has provided enough for all, and yet, needy men are the thoughtless result of greedy men.

I made a Trust out of my personal funds, grateful to Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi for guiding me on this path. It is named Ramanarpanam Trust.

A problem still remained. For any enterprise of that scale, a sound plan of action is essential. Goals must be clearly identified, priorities must be set, ambition and prudence must be balanced, duties and demand must co-exist, and there must be management that is committed, dedicated and answerable. The cause must be the master, the Trust, the willing servant. How was this to be ensured, when evidently I could not be an active participant, given my age and my secluded life of introspection?

There is this little but profound narration in the Song of the Bird by Anthony De Mello:

*On the street I saw a naked child, hungry and shivering in the cold.  
I became angry and said to God, "why do you allow this?  
Why don't you do something?" God did not reply.  
That night he said, quite suddenly, "I certainly did something.  
I made you."*

I suppose I likewise burst out "Bhagavan Ramana, why don't you do something?" And he gently said to me "I did. I gave Anita as a daughter to you."





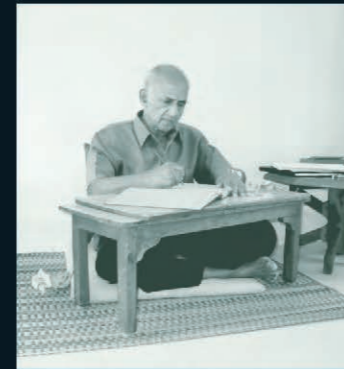
## PROFILE OF DWARAKNATH REDDY

Dwaraknath Reddy, Founder of Nutrine group of companies is the Founder Trustee of Ramanarpanam Trust and its associated organizations like the Ranjini Dwaraknath Reddy Trust, (RDRT). Born in 1924, to a rural agricultural family living in the village of Pulicherla, Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh, India, he studied at the Rishi Valley School, graduated from Madras University and went on to complete his post graduation at the Louisiana State University, America. With a modest capital, he started the Nutrine Confectionery Company and chartered its growth into national eminence, making it the country's largest company in the field of confectionaries.

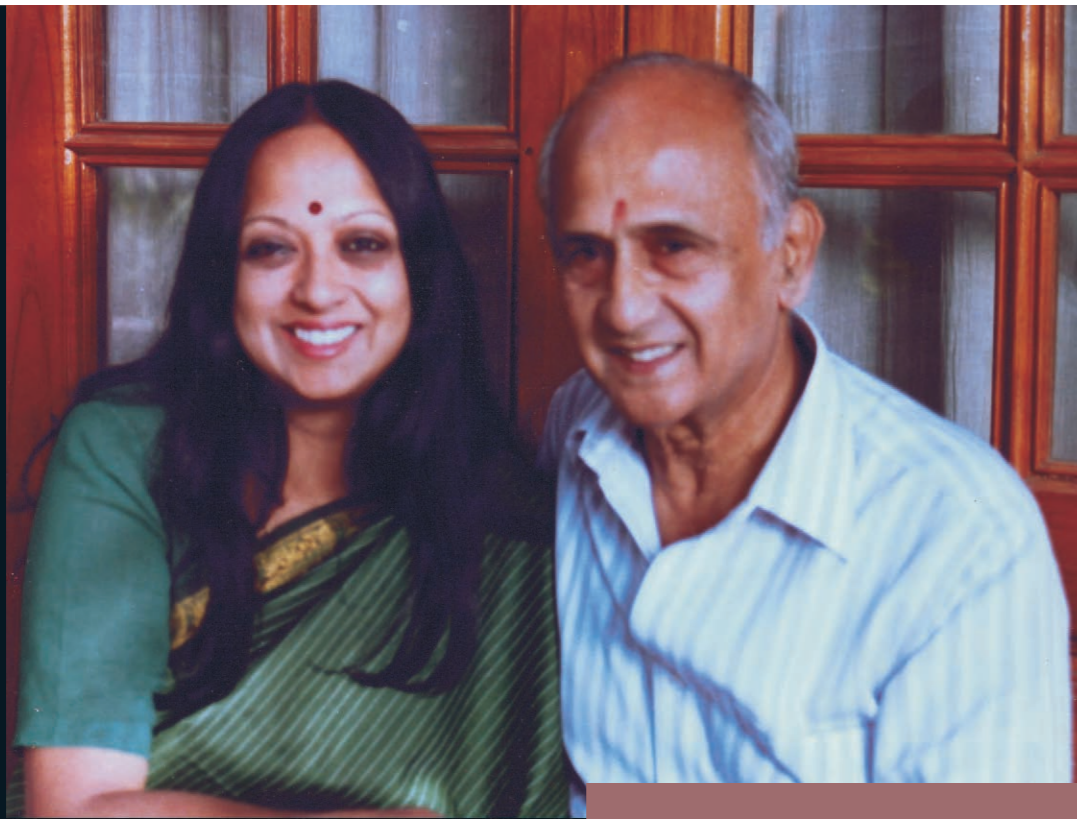
At the height of success in business, he handed over the family owned company to the younger generation and gave himself totally to the pursuit of spiritual enquiry, which has been the inner quest and aspiration of his life even when he functioned diligently as a corporate chief. Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi being the leading light of his self enquiry, Dwaraknath Reddy settled down in 1983 near Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai, living a life of a seeker.

It is his words, deeds and life itself that inspire and guide Ramanarpanam Trust.

"Let us take our love to the people - and humbly offer it to those who will bless us by their acceptance. And when the balance is struck, we shall know that there was never a giving - only a receiving."



Arunachala, the sacred mountain of Tiruvannamalai.



Anita  
and  
Appa

I slowly understood what it meant.

In creation, there are no islands in isolation. In mankind, there are no individual pools, separate from the stream of humanity. Cosmic happenings are an interwoven web of one fabric, and not separate unrelated strands of random events. Long before I even knew the direction my life may take, Bhagavan's integrated plan had seen to it that when my material wealth grew, and my mind could offer it to the needy, I had also been blessed with a daughter who had grown in service and could use it scrupulously and intelligently for the welfare of the downtrodden.

I had the answer. The problem was solved. I would entrust Anita with the sacred task of turning this wealth into worship.

This Trust will be recognized by its fragrance, the sweet fragrance of selfless love. The acceptance of this offering by the needy is all the blessings I seek in return."

And thus Ramanarpanam Trust was born. As an offering or an 'arpanam' of a devoted 'sadhaka' to his spiritual master Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.



## The Planting of The Seed - **THE NEED**

**1978**

Floods

Fires

Demolitions

Threats

Violence

Poverty

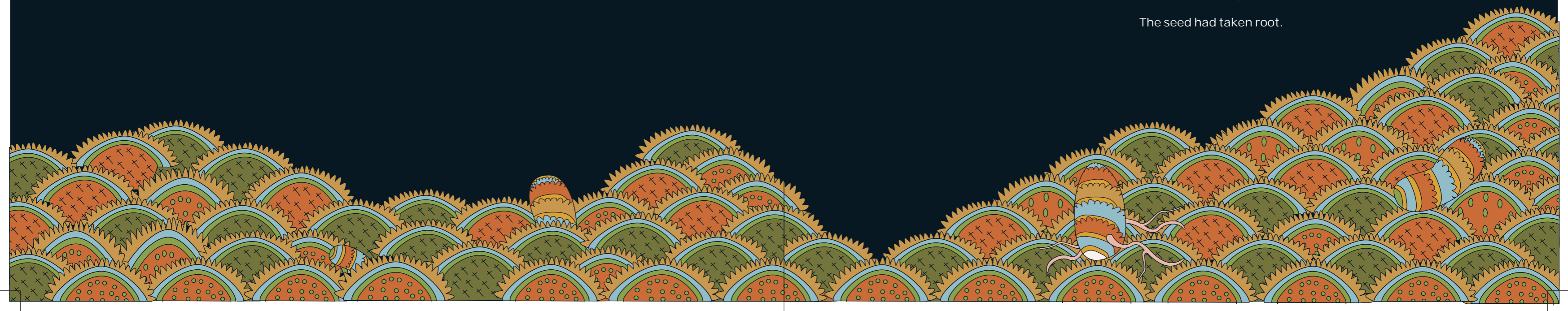
Hunger

These were but some of the realities that had scarred the lives of the people living in slums such as Lakshmipuram, Someshwara and Sudhamanagar. In 1978, Anita entered these areas for the first time, and she saw pain and exploitation in the eyes of the people. For generations, people living in the slums had been marginalized from mainstream development, and denied even the basic needs for survival.

They lived not just in poverty but also in indignity. Women and children were the worst affected.

After that first visit, life was never the same for Anita. She came back possessed with the resolve to strive for change - a change that would replace oppression with hope in the people, especially in the children.

The seed had taken root.



Initially, Anita just spent time with people in the community, learning from them. They were her teachers, she says. They all sat together, united in their vision and determined to improve their lives. Together, they identified and prioritized the needs of the community.

The initial days saw her working with the community; helping them get ration cards, pensions, water and electricity connections, and getting children access to government funded nutrition programmes.

Emerging from these initial experiences, and as the learning grew, there was a paradigm shift in the approach of Anita's work from one of just service to one of activism and struggle. In addition to crisis management, she and the community established systems that were proactive and self-reliant.

In the midst of all this, Association For Voluntary Action and Services (AVAS) was born. Anita was one of its Founding Trustees.

**That was 1980.**

In the meantime, the work in the slums was growing from micro level welfare activities to macro level projects. The community was being mobilized to resolve issues related to land ownership for the poor, slum community shelter projects, leadership development, empowerment programmes for women, youth, and children among other things.

Years passed by and a lot was achieved. Still, a lot more needed to be done. Journeys lay ahead.

**1996.**

Dwaraknath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust (DRRT) was established, at times walking hand in hand with AVAS and at other times, forging new paths on its own.

Life began to change - for thousands of the poor.

Anita mobilizing the Sanyasikunte slum dwellers on their land and shelter rights.





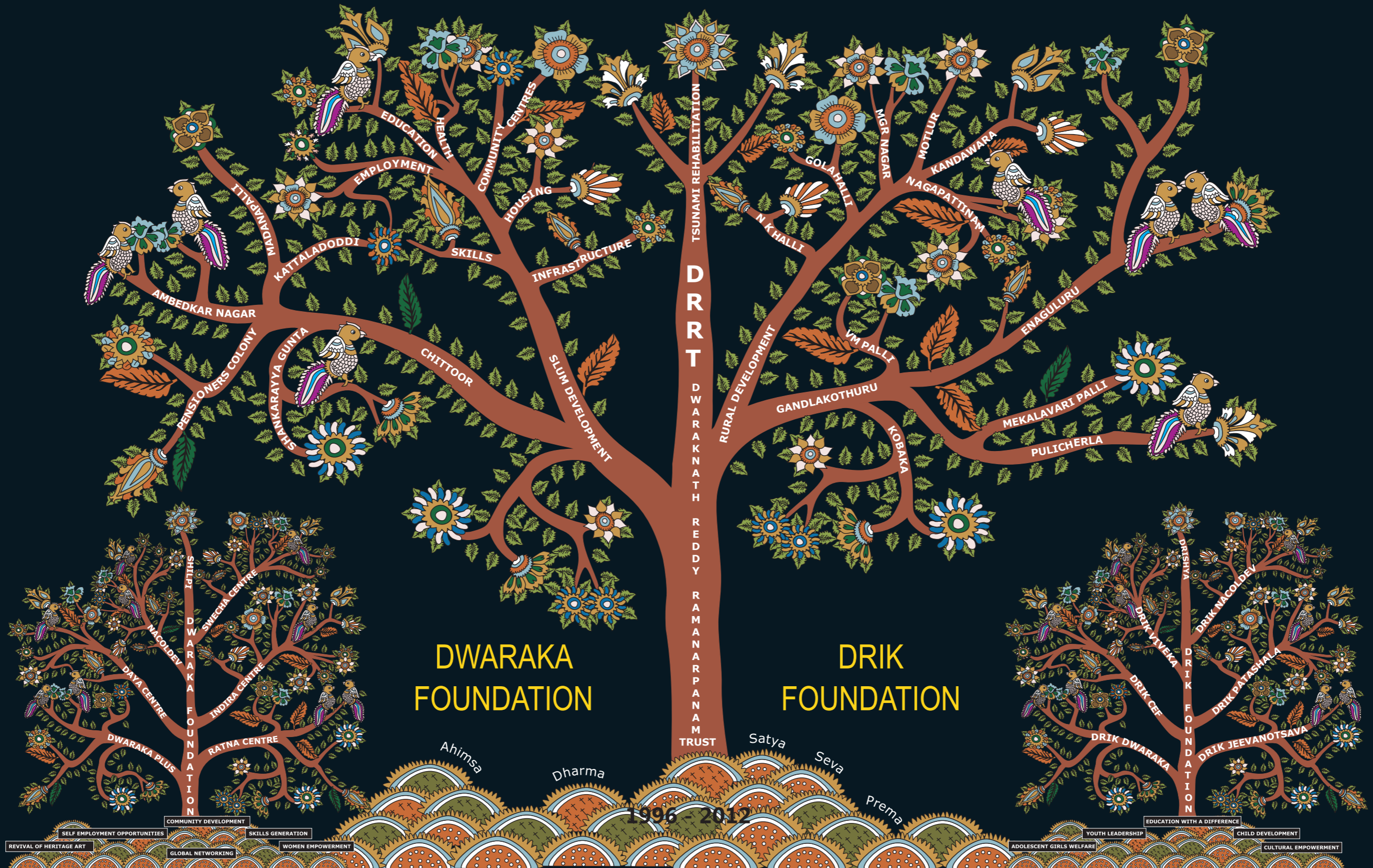
## DRRT works for...

- The rights of the poor in urban slums and villages.
- Establishing processes to empower the poor economically, and enabling them to have sustainable livelihoods.
- Providing better health care through health camps, referrals, distribution of medicines, and facilitating visits by doctors to far-flung hamlets and villages.
- Empowering women to become self-reliant and confident.
- Ensuring the protection of child rights and taking education beyond schooling and towards social transformation. Facilitating the development of leadership and decision making, especially in youth and children through socio-cultural empowerment processes, and enhancing their creative thinking.
- Enabling the poor to access their land rights, better housing and basic infrastructure, thus ensuring better living and working conditions.



Dwaraknath Reddy in G Byappanahalli slum, Bangalore. The initial intervention of DRRT provided water, toilets, shelter, education and health care for this community of 683 families.







## Spring is in the air DRISHYA - An Education Movement

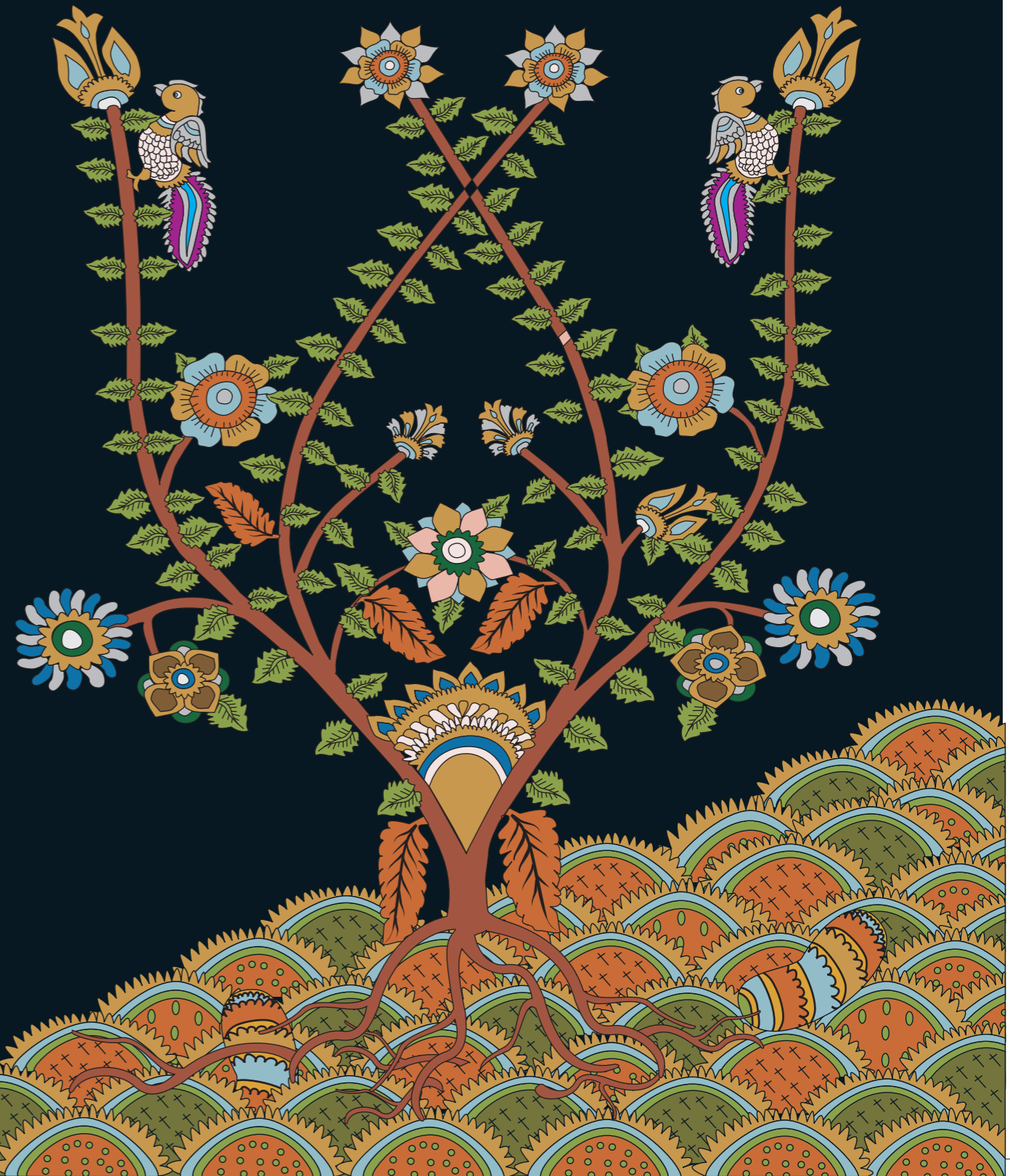


The Dwaraknath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust (DRRT) recognized the need for relevant and empowering education for the poor, one that would usher in social transformation not just within the slum communities but in society at large.

The lives of children growing up in the slums were devoid of basic fundamental rights. They grew without knowing what was learning and laughter, what was security and choice. The conventional system of education, limited as it was in vision and scope, was unable to provide the children with learning that developed their personality, attitude and thoughts. And without access to a complete and holistic system of education, there was little hope for these children.

And though people living in slums struggled to achieve their land and shelter rights, when it came to education for their children, a void was created - a void that grew bigger and bigger with neglect and ignorance, a void that got lost and forgotten in the daily grindstone that is life for the poor.

Drishya, founded by DRRT, was the answer to fill that void.





Children practice 'Surya Namaskara' - saluting the life-sustaining star of the universe.

“ As long as I turn my back upon the sun of Truth, my shadow lay long and dark in front of me and pretended that it was leading while I followed. When I turned the face of enquiry towards the Truth, the shadow at once fell behind me, content to follow. But when I stood in the noon - day blaze of Truth at its zenith, the shadow died, buried beneath my feet. ”

Dwaraknath Reddy



Drishya addressed the need for education that not only taught but also liberated and empowered the child. It crossed the traditional boundaries of a conventional education system to expose the children to a comprehensive vision of learning.

Drishya emerged to

- Initiate an education program that is innovative, relevant and nurturing for the poor.
- Foster leadership in them.
- Give the children an access to quality education that recognizes and complements their needs.
- Provide them with skills that will enable them to cope with the innumerable challenges of a globalized environment.
- Inculcate in the children, the spirit to 'think Khadi'.

As Andai, a leader of Vyalikaval Chowdiah slum shows the way, the children lead Dwaraknath Reddy, Founder Trustee of DRRT, on the inaugural day of Drishya.



Tara Chandavarkar unveils the Drishya movement.





## Making a difference

Drishya, under the guidance of Geetha Narayanan, a renowned educationist, addresses fundamental inequities, existing in the current educational system for the poor, by shifting the notion of a school from a fixed place to a set of spaces that exist and operate simultaneously within and outside the community. It consists of a hub and spokes, that are the learning and knowledge centers, often located within the slum communities.

The children at Drishya are drawn from the five slums of G Byappanahalli, Vyalikaval Chowdiah, Bhandavyanagara, Wahab Garden and Sanyasikunte in Bangalore.

They also access Viveka, an outreach area set up by DRIK, an hour from the city of Bangalore, where the children have an opportunity to understand and explore nature.

Geeta Narayanan, a renowned educationist and the guiding spirit of the education programme at Drishya, lights the lamp.

A happy moment shared by Anita, her father, Dr. Ruth Manorama and Prashanth's grandmother Anthoniamma, as little Nandini looks on.







The whole curriculum is generally derived from their real life situations. Learning, therefore, prepares these children to understand rights and responsibilities within their own communities.

Learning this way is fun, easy and quick.



The Drishya way of learning is all about finding one's self as also, through games, story telling and music. The environment and the activities provide scope for this self-discovery.

The teaching is not structured and yet allows the students to learn on their own and within their spaces. They learn through art forms such as drawing, painting, and craft, games, story telling and music.







Geetha Narayanan and Anita Reddy with the facilitators in Wahab Garden slum and in Nandi Hills.



DRISHYA

Geetha trains the facilitators.  
No compromises are made, perfection is the goal.



The facilitators have been trained by Geetha who has guided and formulated the emerging curriculum at Drishya. They, therefore, have a better understanding of the specialized approach required to teach these children, and the impact of their teaching is clearly visible in the Drishya child.





The children are not only adept in subjects such as Science, Geography, Mathematics, and Current Affairs but more importantly in their ability to analyze, interpret and apply their learning in everyday life.

The impact of such learning has been tremendous.

The Drishya child, learning differently, is well equipped to fit into a world of current challenges.



Nandini, a bright student, was supported by DRRT to overcome a serious health ailment.

Their family was also helped to improve their shelter conditions.

The parents and children of Drishya with AVAS team at an exposure visit to Bannerghatta National Park.



Babu, coming from a poor Gulbarga family, living in G Byappanahalli, shares with pride, his work and achievements in a campaign against smoking.





What makes a Drishya student stand out in the community?

The child is much more discerning and sensitive, and better oriented to look at issues concerning her and the community. A Drishya child reflects leadership qualities that permeate grace and equanimity.

The facilitators make the difference in Drishya.

Sharada, Shubha and Laksha Kumar with the children.

Neela, Manjunath and Vidya with the children.

Shailaja, a facilitator, sits with Vijaykumar and his family, in their home at Vyalikaval slum, explaining his progress to them.







Earn and learn?



Its all about hands on learning that makes the difference and the impact.

Math, geography, biology and language are not the only learning that the children get at Drishya. Through this experiential learning, they are able to understand the trials and tribulations of their parents some of whom are vegetable vendors.

The vegetable unit in which children observe and examine vegetables grown by them.





Drishya children swimming at the K C Reddy Swim Centre.



From every angle, it is a great world for the student at Drishya !







A day in the life of a Drishya child. Diverse experiences, hundreds of opportunities, eager minds and willing bodies come together with committed facilitators transforming young lives.







Learning from 'Aiji', (grandmother) stories of wisdom and survival.



Commuting eager young minds to different learning locales.



Food is served to the children. A hot cup of ragi malt starts the day, with a nourishing mid-day meal in the afternoon. Snacks and tea are served before they leave for home.



Interviewing an officer of a popular public park in Bangalore.





Splashes of colours capture the moods and thoughts of Drishya children.







	23
	4
	8
	1
	1+3

The community map of G Byappanahalli slum and the Drishya homes.

Reading a map seems so easy, geography was never such fun.

Children mapping their community.

Shubha and Laksha explain the community map to R Ramakrishnan.

When the unit on water was introduced, the children were taken to their areas, to map their communities, to assess and learn about the availability and distribution of this essential resource. By doing so, they understood the significance of collating statistics, analyzing data and social mapping within their slums. This stimulated their young minds into questioning issues related to inequity and access to water.





Neela, a facilitator, explains Devika's work to her father and siblings.



## DEVIKA

*"I studied in another school earlier but now at Drishya, it is very different. We have learnt to think for ourselves here. We have also learnt about equality and unity and not to have any fear. At Drishya, we call our teachers akka and anna, and that helps us to feel totally at ease with them. The school is like a temple for us. There is no scolding or beating like in other schools. There is only love at Drishya."*

These are the words of Devika, a young girl of twelve, one among four siblings who lost her mother when she was still young. Her father Fakir, is devoted to his children and struggles to ensure the very best for them. They live at Wahab Garden slum. Thayamma, her aunt who takes care of the children and Fakir chose to send Devika to Drishya rather than retain her in her earlier school where she felt lost and insecure.

*"When she joined Drishya, her level of learning was that of a first or a second class student. In just four years in Drishya, however, she has made up for the lost years and displays the same level of knowledge and skill as that of an 8th standard student", says her father Fakir.*

Today Devika is being looked up to by the members of her community; her self-confidence and assurance making her stand apart from the others.

Devika with her niece Blessy.

Bala and his parents.



Bala in his new home.



## BALA

Bala, a fourteen year old, lives in the slums of G Byappanahalli and his family is one among the 683 families there. His family was forced to shift here after their house was razed to the ground by bulldozers.

*"Before I went to Drishya, I used to roam around aimlessly. But now, after joining Drishya, I have found a new direction and new meaning to life. Earlier I was called a drop out, but here at Drishya, I was selected to go to America by my peers and teachers after Drishya won a DIGIARTS award in a worldwide UNESCO competition. I feel so happy to have been part of the team that worked towards this achievement."*

*"Our conditions at home also have improved. Earlier, I lived in a ramshackle hut, but now, thanks to DRRT, our houses have been reconstructed", says Bala.*

His father Panneerselvam says that they have handed over the responsibility of their children to DRRT. "Even if we don't ask, DRRT takes care of our needs".

Says Panneerselvam, "Its not only what they did for our family, its also what they did for the community. Earlier, women suffered due to lack of privacy as there were no toilets in our area. Now, that the toilets have been built, (with additional support of BELC 31,) the women feel more safe and comfortable."

Bala lights a lamp with Geetha Narayanan at Drishya.





## JEEVANOTSAVA - A Celebration of Life

Jeevanotsava, launched by the Dwaraknath Reddy Institutes for Knowledge (DRIK) in collaboration with AVAS, serves to fill the vacuum existing in the lives of the urban poor children, honing their creative energies and potential.

Derived from the words 'Jeevan' meaning life, and 'Utsava' meaning celebration, Jeevanotsava serves to enable children celebrate their childhood. It strives to network these children and provide opportunities to educate, empower and enlighten them through the Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota network.

The vacuum in the lives of the children is now filled with colour and laughter.







Reaching for the skies, liberated souls dancing in gay abandon.



*Nammaya Kare Sundara Dhare, Manaviya Darpana and Jeeva Jala*

Concerts giving expression through dance forms to the need for unity, harmony and peace, eco-conservation, sustainable development and establishing rights.

A birth of a child is always a moment of joy for any parent. Why should it be different for the poor? They too nurture dreams for their child - dreams in which their child will grow up never having to go hungry, dreams in which their child will have opportunities to learn and grow, in a society that is humane and just.

Are they asking for too much?

Yes, it seems so, for those living in slums or in villages. For them, it is a different story. This dream soon turns dark and dreary as they face a future of stark poverty, injustice and deprivation.

And in the process of growing up, it is the children who are affected the most.

As they grow, they are often exposed to alcohol abuse, domestic violence, peer pressure and an oppressive environment. They are mute spectators to fierce community brawls, that are often expressions of frustration. They tend to lack attention and care from their parents, who are burdened with struggles to ensure even the basic needs for the family. These children are at times coerced into child labour to supplement the family income. Even for those who go to school, the opportunities are very limited.

The only source of entertainment for the children is the TV that beams senseless visuals, dulling and corrupting young minds. All these factors deprive them of a stimulating and gratifying environment leading to a complete breakdown in the holistic nurturing of the children at home or in their school.



*Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota children lead the way.*



Taking a break at a practice session. Time to eat and bond.







Jeevanotsava was launched to fill in the gaps in the educational system, focusing exclusively on the creative needs of the poor children with the primary aim of nurturing and shaping them into confident and responsible individuals.

Song, dance, drama, art and craft are used to enrich the learning by the children. Through these forms, the children get an insight into our tradition, and develop a pride in their culture and nation. Jeevanotsava provides the children exposure to musical instruments such as the tabla, harmonium and the flute. This gives them a hands-on learning of the rich musical traditions of India, something that is usually out of bounds for majority of families living below the poverty line. The children periodically attend and participate in dance and music concerts and have even won awards.

The spirit of Jeevanotsava has spread to the villages also.

It now includes more than a thousand children, coming in from five villages around Chikkaballapur, thirteen slums in Bangalore and three villages around Srikalahasthi and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh.







Suvarna



Sangeetha

Activities

- Exposing children from poor families to the creative arts, such as theatre and dance, traditional and classical music and other art forms.
- Teaching art and craft in a manner that is both therapeutic and sustainable.
- Encouraging them to participate in role plays, street plays, quizzes and sports.
- Organizing debates to develop skills in public speaking and leadership.
- Organizing campaigns to create awareness on children's rights, human rights, and environmental rights among others.
- Organizing programmes to promote the spirit of peace, camaraderie and communal harmony.

Children from Jeevanotsava and Drishya come together at a National Painting Competition held by HUDCO.





# Against HIV, hand in hand

TALKING POINT

These children are different. They are street smart and can put adults to shame with their knowledge of HIV and AIDS. They perform street plays and tell it as it is. They take their audience with them, breaking down myths and clearing the cobwebs and creating awareness of the deadly virus in the process.

This they do through Kamsale, a traditional dance form performed in old Mysore regions and Kollegal. Kamsale is named after the instrument held in the hands of the dancers, comprising a cymbal and a bronze disc and is performed with rhythmic clanging, accompanied by melodious music. The Kamsales are skillfully moved around the body of the dancers in various art forms.

Traditionally performed by men, these little girls performed the dance on Sunday at the Rotary Main Club with a verve and vibrancy putting professionals to shame. In the space of half an hour, the girls told the story of Sundari and her husband who contracts HIV on one of his travels and passes it on to his wife and unborn child. The next few scenes were the unravelling of the couple's trauma and

fears for the future of their child when they find out that they have contracted the virus. Societal reactions of rejection and then acceptance culminated with a celebratory scintillating performance.

Led by Devi, who played the lead role, the nine little girls were ably supported by a team from AVAS, who provided the script and the musical accompaniments. Devi and her friends are part of the AIDS awareness campaign run by AVAS. As Anita Reddy, director of the organisation put it, the success of the campaign was with the men in the slums taking a pledge to stay faithful to their wives.

What is most unique about these little girls is that they all live in the Sanyasi Kunte slum. Sanyasi Kunte slum is one of the 600 odd slums adopted by AVAS or the Association for Voluntary Action and Services.

AVAS has been working in slums for over two decades and its main objective has been to formulate strong and self-reliant communities amongst those living in them, by bringing housing, electricity, health programmes, skills and income-generating activities to their doorsteps.

JANAKI MRALI  
DH photo/Bhargavi



Students perform Kamsale at the Rotary Main Club.

# DECCAN HERALD



Badminton player Prakash Padukone leading the AIDS Walk organised by Rotary Club of Bangalore RI Dist 3190 in Bangalore on Sunday.

## A walk to fight AIDS

DH News Service

BANGALORE: Sunday morning saw several AIDS awareness campaigners taking an 'AIDS Walk' that was flagged off from the Rotary House of Friendship on Lavelle Road.

The walk that was organised by Rotary Club, Bangalore, had over 250 Rotarians participating

along with their counterparts, including Rotract Club and Interact Club members.

The highlight of the walk was a group of slum children from Sanyasikunte, near Srinagar performing skits, songs and dance, all containing messages on AIDS awareness.

Badminton star Prakash Padukone who

participated as the torch-bearer of the event felt that generating awareness among the masses about this deadly disease was every individual's duty.

The participants walked past the Gandhi Statue on MG Road up to the Mayo Hall Junction, where they wrapped their event.



Devi takes the lead role and centre stage in the dance drama 'Nammaya Kere, Sundara Dhare', portraying the imminent need to protect our environment and save mother earth from destruction.



Devi and her friends from Sanyasikunte slum have a message, loud and clear, on AIDS awareness.

## DEVI

Devi, a 15 year old teenager, studies in the 10th standard in a government school in Kemppegowda Nagar. Born and brought up in Sanyasikunte slum, her father, Bhaskar, is a painter and mother, Rukmini is a domestic worker. Devi is the eldest daughter in the family that has six children.

Devi's family lacked even basic amenities like water, electricity and sanitation and a secure shelter. The meagre income of the family was not enough to meet the hunger of eight. Devi seemed destined to live in these conditions all her life.

But what fate had denied her, God made up in plenty. For Devi was a child blessed with talent and needed the right nurturing to blossom.

Jeevanotsava came as an answer to the unvoiced prayers of Devi. She had, at last, got the opportunity to speak through her dance, to express her inner calling. She mobilized a group of girls in her slum and they now perform dance dramas on social themes. They performed in different platforms including the Rotary Club of Bangalore, ACCEPT, an organization working with AIDS and in slum communities.

Devi says that without Jeevanotsava, she would not have reached where she is today. This platform gave her courage and conviction. Her family is happy and proud of her achievements, some of which were published in newspapers. "My father proudly showed his friends the newspaper with my picture in it." She adds, "We may be poor but if we are given opportunities, we are not less than any one in the society."



A Government sponsored mid-day meal programme to which DRRT extends required support.

MRS PALYA SLUM - JEEVANOTSAVA MAKKALA KOOKA

The DRRT intervention in Mrs Palya slum school, in the Jayamahal area in Bangalore, began with its involvement as a tripartite effort along with AVAS and Rotary Club of Bangalore to revive the B R Ambedkar Primary and Higher Government school within the community.

DRRT not only invested in the renovation of the building, but also enthused the teachers to increase their interest in teaching.

Suvarna, a child of Mrs Palya slum is studying in the 7th standard of the Government school. Deeply involved in the Jeevanotsava programme, she has shown potential to be a leader of repute and standing. Every act and action of hers exudes confidence as she performs in front of audiences who come to watch the children dance.

Venkatesh, who is her peer, has shown his talent on the tabla and has represented his school in performances. He was helped by DRRT as he fought for life with a critical heart ailment. After surgery, half of his body was paralysed but being a Jeevanotsava child, he fought back with valour and a will to survive.

The children never miss an opportunity- they love learning tabla from Raam Reddy, a 12th standard student of Aditi.

A dynamic, enthusiastic bunch, these children would do any programme proud with their song and dance skills.





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Dhanalakshmi R.  
Wahab Garden.

22/10/06

എന്റെ നേർച്ചകൾ :

My name is Dhanalakshmi R iam living in Wahab Garden. I want to spend a few words that are related to our Slum area childrens. When before Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota programme was not started we were going to school after coming from school, we were spending or wasting our time in watching T.V., playing and wasting our time with our neighbours or friends. in our family my father was the servant of alcohol, he used to drink and beat everybody, we were unhappy with our family. After school hours we were the childrens of wasting, we were not happy with our school and house, we were working as slaves because we was not happy. In the school we were thinking about what to do after our school hours. When going to home, we were so unhappy. One day in our area some dancers came and danced and singing with their small childrens. but we were standing in a corner and were watching we were thinking seeing that the childrens who were singing and dancing, even when we saw that children we were so sad that we not able to sing or dance like that childrens. Really we were afraid to talk on the stage; because we was not knowing what is stage. in our school they ask us to sing or dance, we were unable. because we was not knowing even a single song. to sing. Really our slum area childrens life was a waste life. because of all this reasons.

The emerging leadership - Jeevanotsava core group girls at Viveka.



Dhanalakshmi

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Jeevanotsava was started and it now 4 years, when Jeevanotsava was started we were so happy. after our school hours we were waiting so happy to go to Jeevanotsava and learn new things that are related to our studies, life, and our worldly things. In Jeevanotsava we are able to learn dancing, singing, drama, playing and all other activities, in our Jeevanotsava there are teachers who teaches everything to us. even our school teachers also will not teach us so happily. I am sorry. Just of all i should mention the meaning of Jeevanotsava. Jeevanotsava means the festival in our slum area childrens. "തന്നെല്ലാ ദൈവം ഒരു കാര്യം ചെയ്യാൻ ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നു" there will teach us to sing, devotional, parlowdic, folk and all the types of songs, even there will teach us to dance, and play all the games, there will be very close to us and like our family members there will be so happy with us. as i mentioned in the first page. "we was not able to know what is stage" but when Jeevanotsava was started we know to talk on the stage, sing on the stage and to dance on the stage. we have performed in 4 years 3 dramas. In Jeevanotsava not only our slum area childrens but also all the slum area childrens we all together joined and performed our small & lovely dramas which are taught by Jeevanotsava teachers. To our small & lovely dramas all the high officers, chief ministers and all the high members were attended as chief guests. in our first dramas that is 'manchiya kompanai' which taught us about our country people who suffered a lot to free a our country from the yugines.



Dhanalakshmi, a Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota child says that Jeevanotsava is the backbone for children in slums giving them opportunities that have empowered them and realized their dreams.

Her expression is a reflection of feelings felt by many a child for Jeevanotsava.

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in our second drama 'Jeeva Jala' which taught us about water, how the people are polluting & wasting water, water is a natural resources, but people are making waste. So we should save the water. "without food we can stay for a day, but without water we can't stay for a day" this is important verse that a Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota' taught the people and the childrens.

in our third drama "Nedav Ee Noodu God" which taught us about 'Eorbaninglu' means the five important things that are very important to human life to live, before we were not knowing what is 'Eorbaninglu' we were thinking that are the five devils or evil spirits, but due to Jeevanotsava we have learned 'Eorbaninglu' that are: Earth, Water, Air, Sky & Sun. but people are making waste of all this important things. we should save this all. this drama taught us how the people are polluting all this.

We are so happy because all the slum area childrens have joined together and performed by dance and singing. We all have performed this dramas, dance and songs in place like Guruswara, ka Bhavna, J.C.S, Amlekhar Bhavna and other places we enjoyed all this because of Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota.

Jeevanotsava is a good friend or backbone to us. We have visited some historical places through Jeevanotsava.

JEEVANOTSAVA

Jeevanotsava is very helpful to studies because in Jeevanotsava our teachers will teach us very thing not only dance, songs, drama, but also related to our studies, so that we are able to answer the question that are questioned by our school teachers.

Even a every important thing in our student life is to study, but due to our poverty, we are unable to go to school. But Jeevanotsava is a light to our life, because Jeevanotsava is supporting us to study by giving us. Scholarships. By Jeevanotsava we are very well educated.

The aims of Jeevanotsava is to make childrens educated and to become a very good person in there lives. "By Jeevanotsava we are learning how to be live with equality. തന്നെല്ലാ ദൈവം ഒരു കാര്യം ചെയ്യാൻ ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നു. By equality we can gain the power which is not able to do by a single".

Jeevanotsava is the backbone to us, but without backbone nobody can live.

"I am so happy because due to Jeevanotsava not even me but also all the slum area childrens.

First of all i thank a lot to Mrs. Anitha Reddy who has started Jeevanotsava because she wanted the childrens to be educated and to get a leadership in the slum area childrens. And even she has brought a respect to the childrens. This is due to Mrs. Anitha Reddy. I Thank, very much to Anitha Reddy.

In Jeevanotsava not only we are participating and also our school friends, and our relation childrens. Because in our school we could tell all the things that are happened in Jeevanotsava, we & all our friends are very happy because of Jeevanotsava. I thank a lot to Mrs. Anitha madam and our Jeevanotsava Teachers.

Thank You.

From  
Dhanalakshmi R.  
Wahab Garden



# ಈಗನಾಡು

10

ಶನಿವಾರ 3 ಮೆ 2004

## ಮುರಿಕಿವಾಡಲ ಪೆದಲಪು 'ಮಾನವೀಯ ದರ್ಶನ'ಂ

ಶನಿವಾರ, ಮೆ 3 (ಜೀವನೋತ್ಸವ) ನಗರೀಯ ರಂಗ... ಆ ವೇ ಮುರಿಕಿವಾಡಲ ಪೆದಲಪು... ಜೀವನೋತ್ಸವ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು... ಜೀವನೋತ್ಸವ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು...

ಮುರಿಕಿವಾಡಲ ಪೆದಲಪು... ಜೀವನೋತ್ಸವ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು... ಜೀವನೋತ್ಸವ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು...

# City Express



Children of Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota perform during Jeeva Jala, a programme of song and dance held to create awareness on water preservation on Saturday.

# The New Indian Express

## Drama on ecology conservation

Bangalore, May 26: Nam-maya Kare, Sundara Dhare (Our call: A beautiful earth), a drama on environmental conservation was enacted by teenagers in the city on Friday as part of Jeevantotsava Makkala Koota. What was significant was that these were the children of the urban poor. The musical drama was organised by the Association for Voluntary Action and Services (AVAS) and Dwrakanath Reddy Ramnarpanam Trust (DRRT).

"The play stresses the need to protect the environment for the future of all living beings. This is part of our efforts to enlighten the lives of the children and adolescents of the villages and slum areas with 'Fun'," said managing trustee of DRRT Anita Reddy. An industrialist Anju Chandrashekar was the Chief Guest. •ENS

# THE HINDU

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

## An exhilarating performance by slum children

THE TEARS that rolled down the children's eyes as they bid farewell to one another after their first stage performance were probably misplaced. The children from city slums, who had presented an energetic cultural evening, apparently thought they were not going to see one another for a long time. Little did they know that the Association for Voluntary Action and Services (AVAS), instrumental in letting their dreams take wings on the stage, was planning to make a difference to their lives on a continuous basis.



Slum children performing cultural programmes at an event organised by the Association for Voluntary Action and Services in Bangalore.

No wonder, Anita Reddy, managing trustee of AVAS, is excited at the publicity the event got. The children and their parents were excited too. The father of a child, whose photograph appeared in a newspaper, knocked at the door of Rahat Begum, community organiser of AVAS in Mrs Palya slum, at 6 a.m. the other day. "I woke up to see a broad smile on his face," Ms. Begum says. Many parents were happy that their children too, like those of the rich, could perform on stage and get publicity. The children had undergone training. A simulated event in August gave stability to their wavering confidence. What is the big deal, you may wonder. If you see the wretched lives of slum children with a compassionate heart, you will understand its importance, Ms. Reddy says. The drunkard fa-

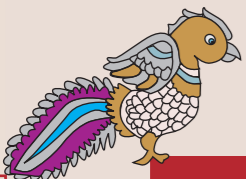
# VIJAY TIMES



Slum children stage a play as part of Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota, which was organised at Guru Nanak Bhavan on Friday.

## Cultural platform for slum children

HUNDREDS of children representing various slums in the City gathered at Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota for a cultural programme on Friday. Organised by Association of Voluntary Action and Services (AVAS), in association with Dwarakanath Reddy Institute for Knowledge, this event is organised every year to promote extra-curricular activities among slum children. "Through such programmes, we try to mould the new generation and induce leadership qualities and human values in them," said AVAS Director Anita Reddy. "We also want to imbibe in them a deep sense of nationality, responsibility, peace, harmony, unity and love. It's a joyous celebration of truth, Ahimsa and unity, which was an integral part of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi!" she added. A special programme titled *Mannina Darpana* was presented by the children, which reflected the views of freedom and aspirations for a better life. Founder-President of Manav Ekta Mission and Sansang Foundation, Mutmaz Ali inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp.





## The Canopy of Knowledge Spreads - VIVEKA

Where the sky is my roof,  
the mountains my boundaries,  
and the lake the mirror of my future,  
there may I learn the Truth of myself  
and of a society where every child has the  
right to a childhood.

Devi, a young girl from Sanyasikunte slum in Bangalore, stood on a mound at the Viveka campus, pivoted around on her feet like a spinning top, hands swinging in gay abandon and hair flying in the air. Gasping for breath in awe of what she saw around her she said "Amma, thank you so much for showing me a world that I did not know existed for real. I feel the magnitude of that huge mountain within me. I suddenly feel big inside".

Viveka was conceived for the Devis of the city slums, languishing in abject poverty.





The Viveka campus, an hour's drive from Bangalore, nestled in a picturesque rural environment is being developed as a residential institution for children from urban poor communities, as also children from the surrounding villages, taking 'education beyond schooling'.



Soil stabilized bricks on site, promoting eco-conservation.

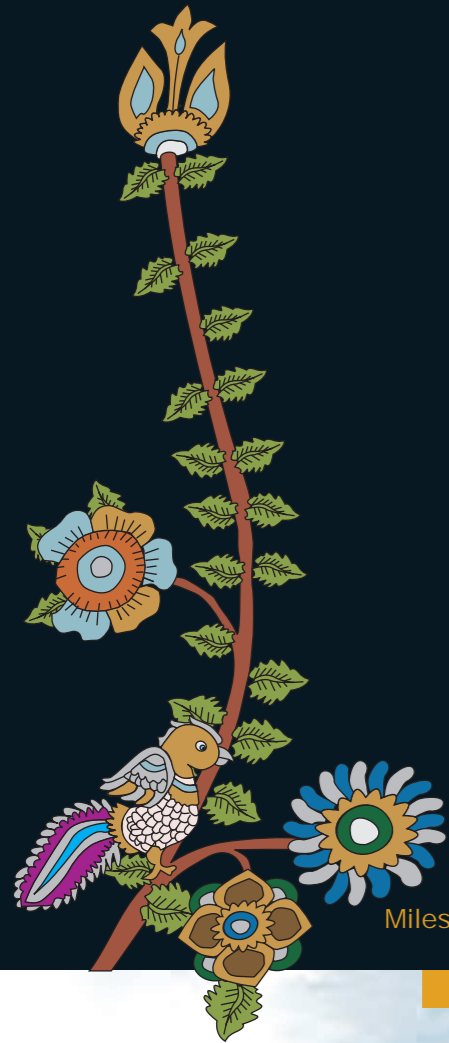
Viveka was born to liberate the spirit of children living in polarized worlds, bonding together children living in the slums of the city, caught in a snare of urban poverty and those in villages, languishing in rural neglect. Neither know the other's world, but both survive despite the shackles.

DRIK, having established the Jeevanotsava and Drishya initiatives, felt the link would be complete with the setting up of Viveka. Investing in a campus of over 40 acres just an hour's drive from Bangalore, carefully selecting property nestled amidst sylvan surroundings, Ramanarpanam Trust is bringing alive an 'eco-campus', the very growth and development of which becomes the learning for the child.

Viveka was conceived, also for those children from neighbouring villages, just an hour's drive from the city, totally alienated from the 'booming development' around them.

Conceived to take 'education beyond schooling', this residential campus, free for the poor, is dedicated to transcend urban-rural boundaries and empower children from city slums and isolated villages to usher in social transformation.

Villagers on the campus, enhancing skills and creating employment.



Miles to go before I sleep...

Motlur village in the distance, wall of hope in the foreground, growing brick by brick.





#### Learnings, existing and proposed, at Viveka

- Environmental studies and sustainable eco-development programs including organic farming and agriculture.
- Indigenous health care and medicinal plant cultivation.
- Nature studies.
- Water management and conservation.
- Exploration of alternative energy sources.
- Sports, including adventure sports, and team games.

Many relevant and contemporary studies such as media, communications, IT and human development studies are proposed in the future. Additionally, the Viveka experience will integrate a space for yoga and meditation and have a training and design center for developing vocational skills.

DRRT is working to realize the dream of a holistic educational life experience for the children at Viveka.

Greening the barren land at Viveka.



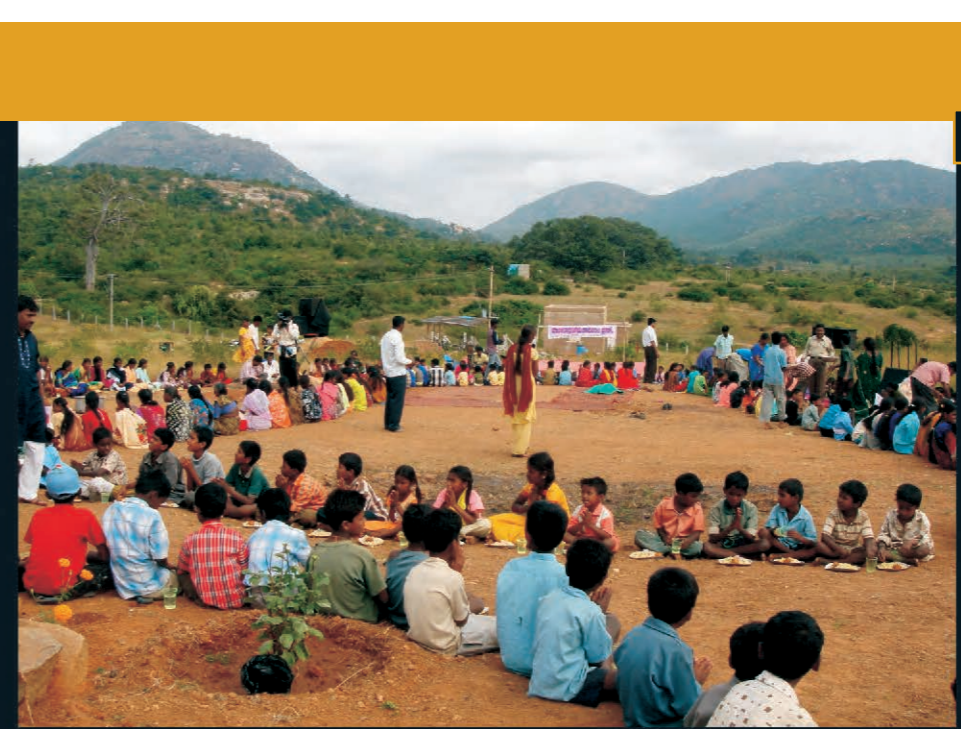
Children from rural and urban backgrounds bonding - planting saplings at the campus.



The Sneha Kuteera, from where 'ideas and actions' spring !







Dance performance by girls from Vyalikaval Chowdiah slum.

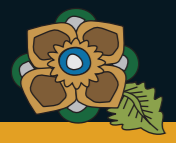
Relishing a special meal !

Rural and urban young minds come together at Viveka-the networking happens here.

Winning is all about participation, children race to their glory. This is sports at Viveka.

We assert! Dalit boys of Motlur village.

We salute, with pride !





We are the world, we are the children...  
Children from Motlur, Golahalli, Nallakadirenahalli  
and the slums of Bangalore bond at Viveka  
and find expression through different art forms,  
song, dance and activities.



Finding expression and free will through art.



If music is the food of love, then let's play on  
- DRRT team singing songs with the children.

Nothing can stop us now....





## The Forking of the Branches

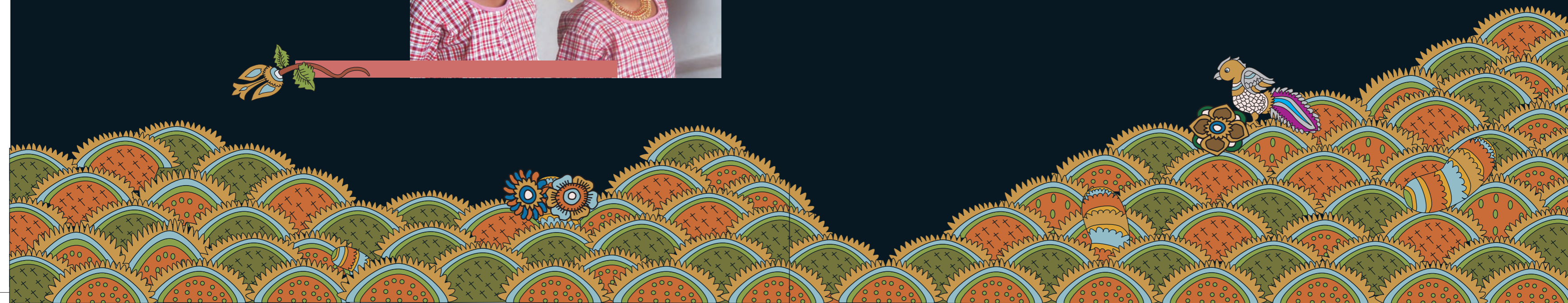
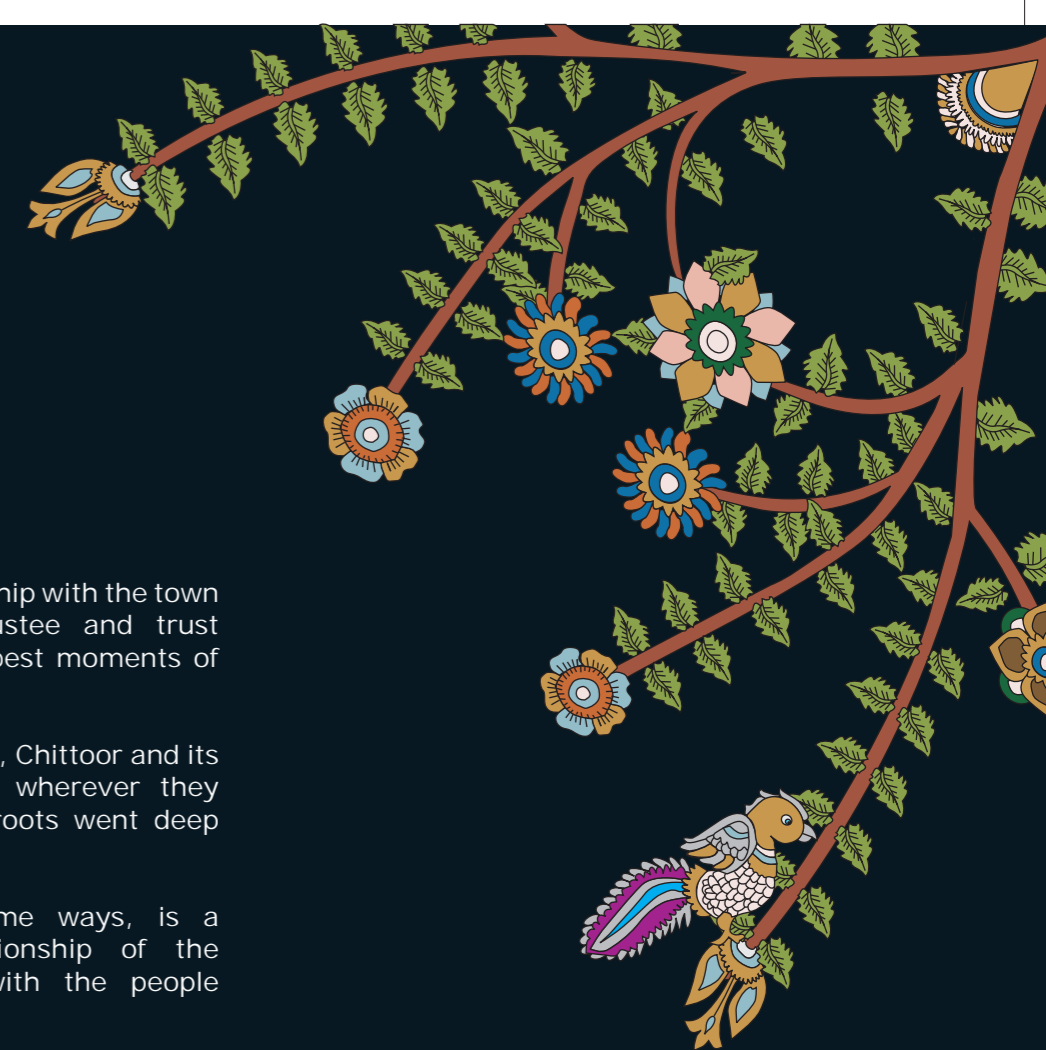
### DRIK PATASHALA - making a difference in Chittoor slums



DRRT enjoys a special relationship with the town of Chittoor. Its Founder Trustee and trust members spent some of the best moments of their life in this town.

As they grew and branched out, Chittoor and its people, remained with them wherever they went. Likewise, the family's roots went deep into the soil of this town.

The DRIK Patashala, in some ways, is a manifestation of this relationship of the Dwaraknath Reddy family with the people of Chittoor.







Shankarayyagunta slum in Chittoor in 2006.  
Home to many a child studying at DRIK Patashala.



DRIK Patashala, on one hand, strives to inculcate in young minds the values of India's traditional learning and wisdom, and on the other, stimulates a scientific temperament that enables them to analyze and develop a vision for the future.

The treasures of DRIK Patashala.







The journey begins - the first step.

The building bought by DRRT for DRIK Patashala.



Operational since June 16, 2006, DRIK Patashala, although still in a nascent stage, has already begun to impact the lives of the children by providing an environment that liberates the spirit in them. A never before experience is unfolding in the slums of Chittoor town where gaining knowledge and learning has become fun. Song or art, math or language, these children, many drops outs earlier, now look forward eagerly to come to school. DRIK Patashala is stimulating a better understanding in the parents towards their children and their educational needs.

It is also striving to empower people across different age groups and gender, and encouraging them to be proactive towards critical issues pertaining to their lives and livelihood. These include health, education, and self-employment among others.

At present, functioning within the neighbourhood, DRIK Patashala will soon move to a proposed 3 acre campus in the heart of Chittoor town, nestled amidst five urban poor communities of Shankarayagunta, Ambedkarnagar, Greampet, Kajur and Janakarpalli.

Thulasi was just another neglected child of the slum, dreading the thought of attending school. Today, she loves coming to DRIK Patashala.



Amreen, a quick learner, and her family live near Ambedkar Nagar slum.



Basha, a tailor, supports his family of eleven children. DRIK Patashala takes care of two among them - Imran and Rehman.



Roshni is among the youngest of the children at DRIK Patashala. She is a bright girl, full of life, lively and bubbly.





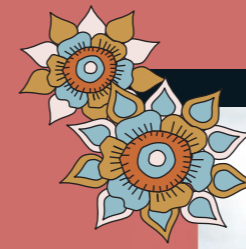
While earlier conditions of housing were very poor, DRRT has begun to respond to the needs of the children and their families in a holistic manner. This is being done through different programmes such as shelter upgradation as can be seen here.

DRRT formed all the parents into self help groups motivating them into savings and initiating each group by setting up a seed capital fund. Four such groups are functioning.

Old age support, medical and health care have also been extended to the people. These are the other activities of DRRT related to DRIK Patashala.



Mohammed's house, old and new



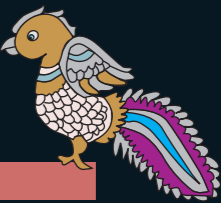
Shelter and other basic infrastructure support extended to children of DRIK Patashala and their families.

Mohammed and Imran are cousins studying at DRIK Patashala. Earlier Mohammed lived alone with his grandmother Basheeruneesa, and his hearing and speech impaired mother, who, for all purposes, could not contribute much to the family needs. His father, being mentally challenged, wandered away from the family.

His uncle, Imran's father, plies an auto and supports all the members living in this household.

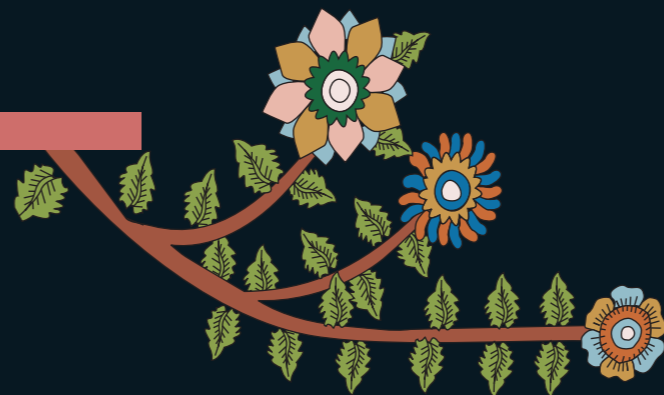






16 June, 2006. DRIK Patashala takes birth in Chittoor. Dwaraknath Reddy and Vikram Reddy light the lamp of hope that will illuminate the lives of hundreds of children from slums by giving them free education.

Founder Trustee of DRRT, Dwaraknath Reddy with teachers and staff of DRIK Patashala.



The spirit of sharing, the joy of excited chatter - its all happening here. Parents and children together at DRIK Patashala.





“ I am born with a capacity to wonder, so I wonder at the majesty, and magnificence of the world I inhabit. Often with delight, sometimes with awe, I look upon the vastness and variety in creation, the expanses of space and the might of elemental energies, the ocean and the dew drop, the fierce sun and twinkling star, the mountain and the flower, the oak and the weed, the butterfly and the beast. ”

Dwaraknath Reddy

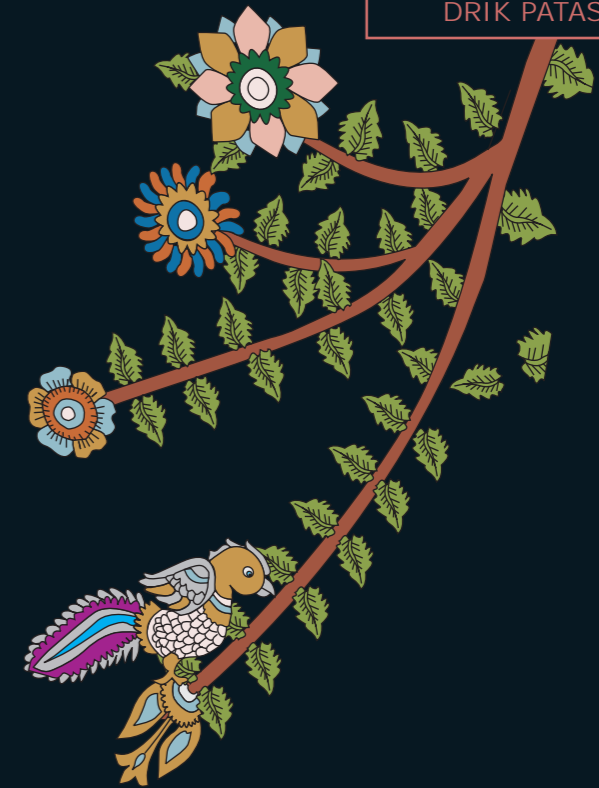






Growing vegetables in the school backyard.

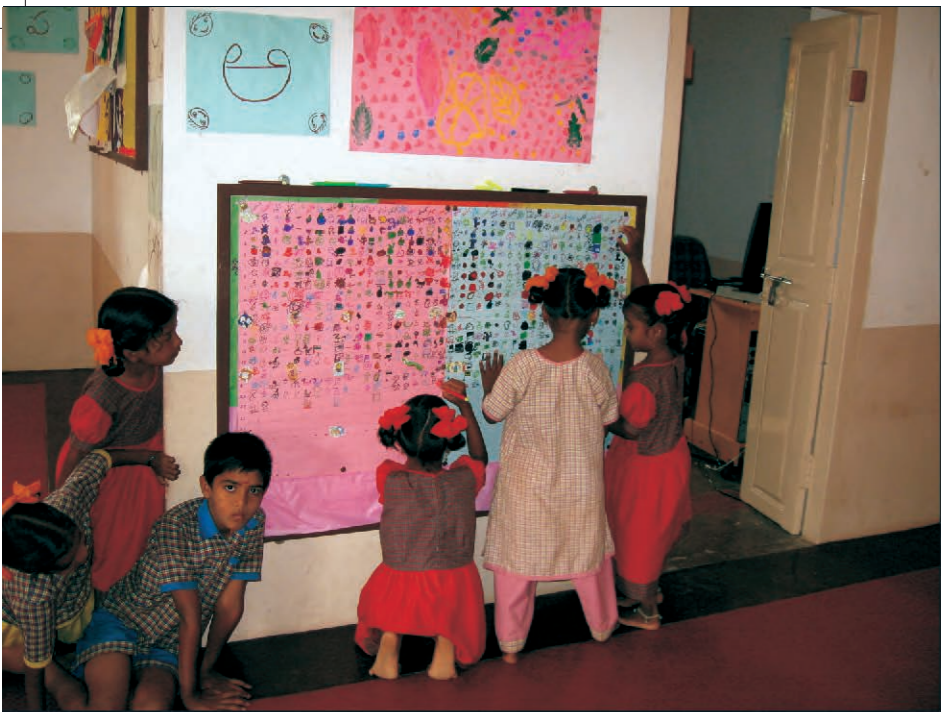
DRIK PATASHALA



Experiential learning at DRIK Patashala. Children at the farmers market in Chittoor, observing real life situations to understand, and study.







Learning through engaging activities and experiments, never a dull moment at DRIK Patashala!

A day in the life of a child at DRIK Patashala.



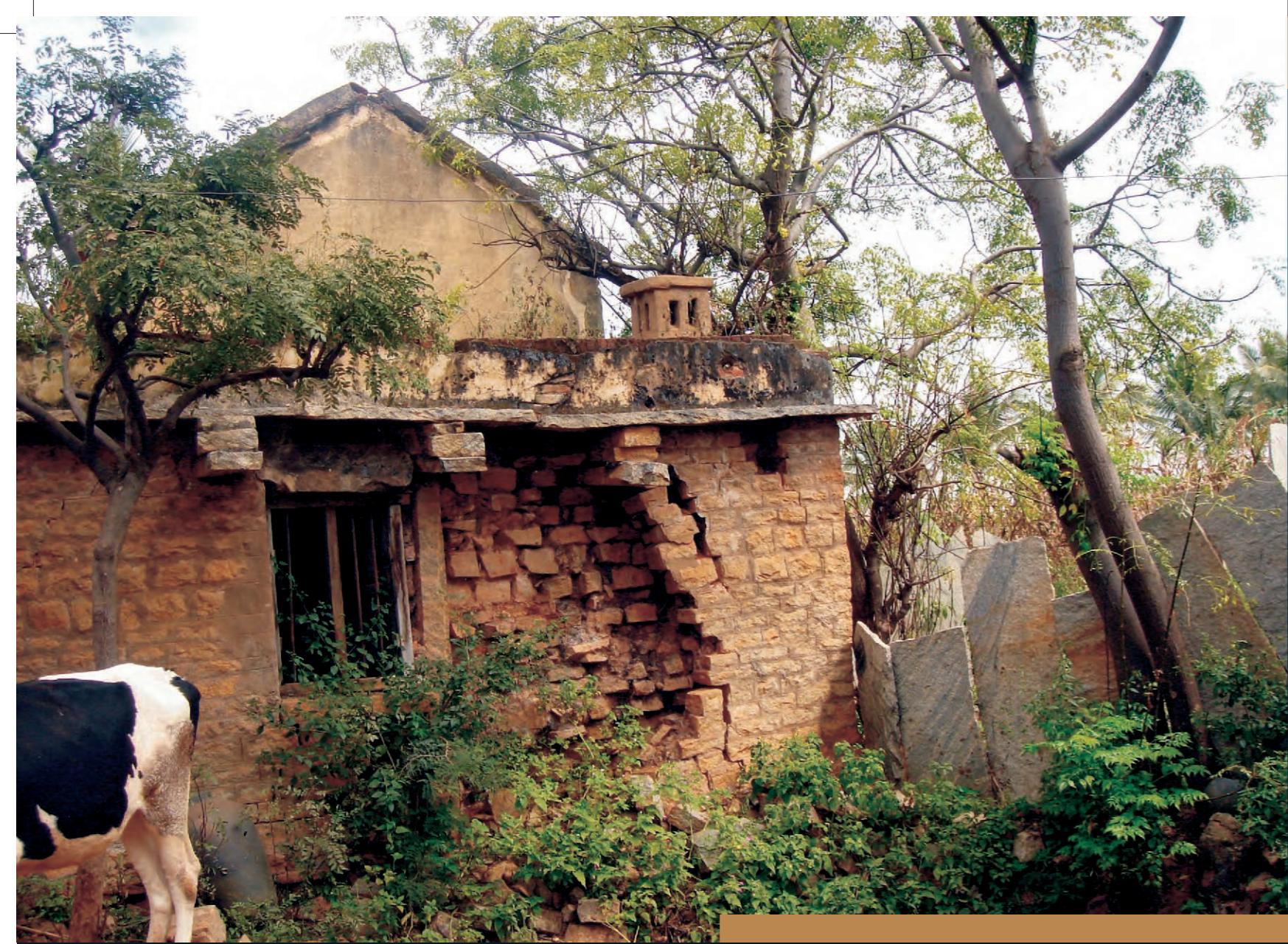


## KANDAWARA

The primary school in which Sir M Visvesvaraya did his early schooling in Kandawara. The buildings before renovation was undertaken by DRRT.

Kandawara is a village located near Chikkabalapur, about 55 kms from the city of Bangalore. A chance meeting with Narasim Katary, a well known judge of Canada, took DRRT to Kandawara, as its work at the Viveka campus was already beginning to have an impact in the surrounding villages.

There were two very obvious situations that made an impact on the DRRT team on their first visit to Kandawara. One, the completely dilapidated, crumbling and almost haunted looking school building, obviously over a hundred years old and in disuse. DRRT learnt that this was the historic primary school where Sir M Visvesvaraya had done his early schooling. Two, it saw that the children studying in this school were absolutely lively, buoyant, capable and raring to go. The first thought that crossed Anita's mind was, "Heavens ! There are a hundred 'Visvesvarayas' here" !



Narasim Katary introduces the village elders and school teachers to Anita.







DRRT's interventions to realize the potential possibilities, that were beginning to fritter away, were two fold; firstly it revived and reconstructed the school, with support of engineers who had designed technologically sound and innovative construction methodologies at the Indian Institute of Science. Along with AVAS's engineering support also, DRRT retained the heritage architecture and made the school habitable for the children.

Secondly, it introduced the Jeevanotsava programmes, networking the children of the Kandawara Government School with the rest of the Jeevanotsava Makkala Koota, both in the city and in the other villages.



The primary school after renovation.

Children taking part in cultural programmes at the re-opening of the school.







## The Tree of Life Branches DWARAKA - Development of Weavers And Rural Artisans in Kalamkari Art

It was in 1999 that Anita and Appa, first went to Srikalahasthi in response to a desperate plea by an ageing Kalamkari artist.

They met with artisans and weavers who spoke of the mighty debt trap that had engulfed them all. They also spoke of the physical disabilities and illnesses that they contracted due to the nature of their work.

Anita and Appa then sat down with a group of young girls, a few Kalamkari artisans and weavers who had all come together with hope and anticipation for a new beginning. The first step was to mobilize the Kalamkari artists into a collective.

DWARAKA was born. To fulfill their dreams and aspirations.



DRUVA - Dwaraknath Reddy centres  
for Upliftment of Village Arisans



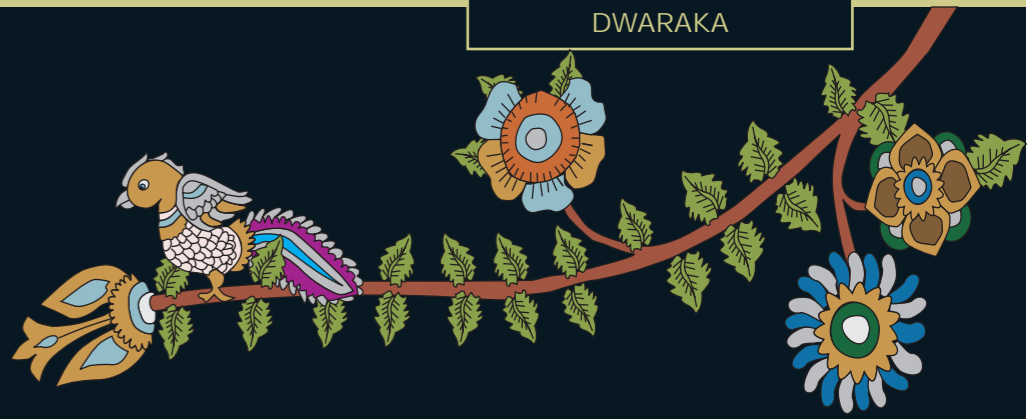


Indian crafts are a celebration of all that is vibrant in our people and in our country. Craftspersons create pieces that are distinct and stunning. Every work of art is crafted with skill, love and devotion.

Kalamkari, the very colour of tradition, is an art form that took root in India in the temple town of Srikalahasthi in Andhra Pradesh, hundreds of years ago. Kalamkari grew to be very popular and was predominantly used in temples to depict stories in the form of narrative panels. These exquisite paintings echo the effervescent look towards life prevalent more than seven centuries ago, when the art flourished under the patronage of King Krishnadevaraya. Derived from the words 'kalam' meaning pen and 'kari' meaning work, the art of Kalamkari uses a combination of plant materials as natural vegetable dyes on fabric. Although it is a complex and time consuming technique, the designs and the final effect of the textiles are simply stunning. Because each Kalamkari cloth is hand-painted, each piece of art has a special personal touch that ensures no two paintings are alike.

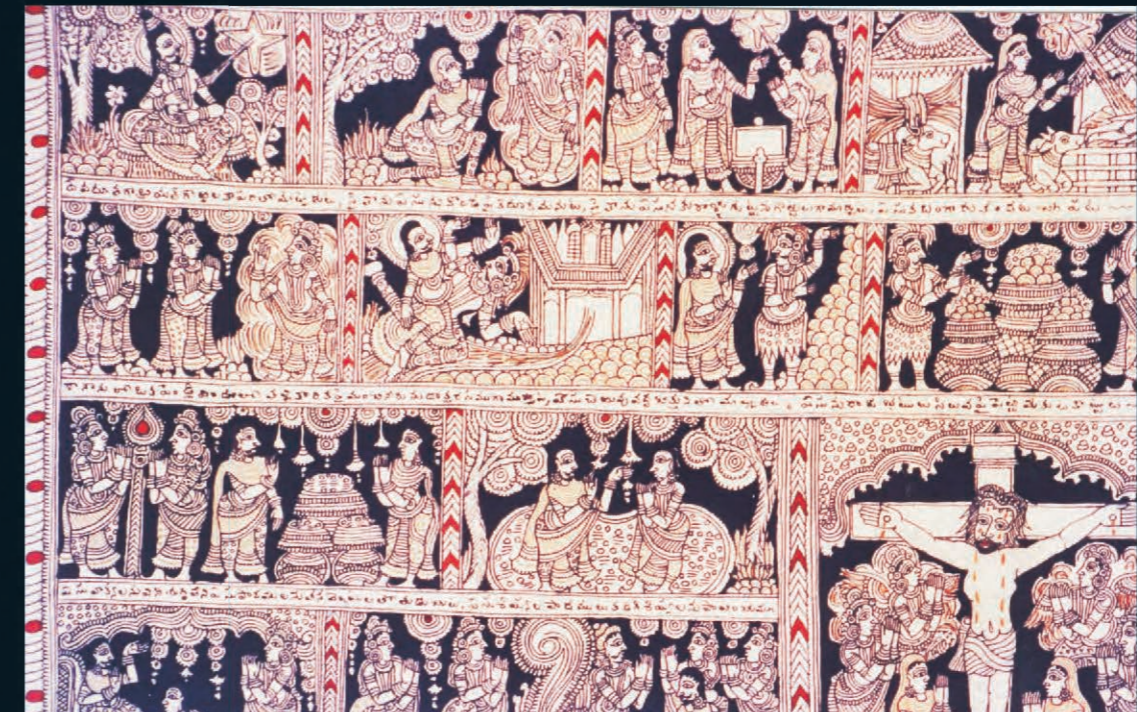
Unfortunately, this art form was gradually dying out and the artisans were struggling to survive. There was a critical need to revive the art and rejuvenate the community. These artists had been struck with poverty, and were desperate to be empowered with knowledge, skills and opportunities. So were the weavers. These weavers produced some of the country's finest cotton fabrics in their tiny huts barely large enough to accommodate their families, leave alone their looms!





Hand painted Kalamkari art on traditional wall panels - the deft fingers of artists immortalizing the magic of epics, mythologies and timeless classics. Be it a pair of smiling elephants regarded as symbols of Indian strength and fortitude or the tree of life, Kalamkari celebrates the splendour of nature and the grandeur of history.

Drawing and painting on cloth, unmistakably Kalamkari.







No light in sight.

Desperate weavers and their families were facing an uncertain future in the dusk of their lives when DWARAKA was born to make the difference. New dreams, and new hopes now sustain families who had lost all.







Purushottam knocked at the door of Anita's house in Bangalore seeking help. He had knocked on many a door before that but in vain.

Anita's doors opened. His desperate cries for help were heard by her and Dwaraknath Reddy. In his cries, they heard the anguish of hundreds of Kalamkari artisans who faced hunger and unemployment. They could sense that Kalamkari art was dying a slow death right in front of the helpless artisans.

They realized that an art practiced by generations of artisans seemed to now be coming to an end.

They were determined to make a change.



Mapping a blueprint for the future. Anita and Gita Balakrishnan meet with the weavers.



DWARAKA

The DWARAKA journey begins.

Moments in the history of time are made of these. The first batch of DWARAKA girls were assured all help by Dwaraknath Reddy

Anita and Appa, who had met with the artisans and weavers in response to the plea from a Kalamkari artist, assured them that the Ramanarpanam Trust would initiate a socio-economic empowerment program for them. He said that this would, as the proverbial saying goes 'help them to learn to catch fish for a lifetime rather than be given fish to eat for a day'.





Suresh, Nagaraj and Gopi from Srikalahasthi with the renowned painter G Vasudev.

At the inaugural programme of the DWARAKA showroom, the one and only in India dedicated to promoting hand painted Kalamkari products.



The Ramanarpanam Trust lived up to that assurance. In the few years since its inception, hundreds of artists and weavers had been impacted by the support of DWARAKA. The art of Kalamkari had found a new lease of life.

However, many challenges lay ahead for DWARAKA.

In Srikalahasthi, the lack of support to their skill had resulted in a few artisans wanting to go towards other vocations. And those who continued could barely make a living for themselves. In many a weaver's family, there were young women who felt that that if they could acquire the skill to practice Kalamkari, they could also supplement a depleting family income. They had naturally ingrained talent that could be nurtured and perpetrated.

Dwaraknath Reddy lights the inaugural lamp and felicitates dalit artisans from Enaguluru, a village of stone cutters and quarry workers.

Pratap Reddy, DRRT Trustee, introduces the Kalamkari art to the visitors.







Striding away from despair towards hope - Anita with the community at V M Palli village. Dalit girls break traditional bastions to come out in the open and take pride in being known as DWARAKA artisans.



Raji Narayan for whom quality comes first, second and third...interacting with the artisans.

Usha and R Ramkrishnan motivate the artisans.

DWARAKA began to train the younger generation, mostly young girls, in the techniques of Kalamkari under the leadership of artists such as M Nagaraj and B Gopi. They were supported by K Suresh who organized the community.

Remarkably, in the span of just a few months, their skills grew from drawing simple lines and curves on paper, to beautiful paintings of flowers, birds and figures set in elaborate patterns and intricate designs on cloth.

Kalamkari became not only the primary source of income for these young women but also a new found passion in their life. It was also to become a passion for Raji Narayan, a close friend of Anita, who came as a visitor to the DWARAKA's initiative in Srikalahasthi.

Raji Narayan and R Ramkrishnan, who had also contributed for DWARAKA's growth from strength to strength, joined Anita to guide the DWARAKA effort.





DRRT responds to his pleas and builds him a new residence-cum-training centre. A new house for him, and a beginning for DWARAKA.

Change and empowerment take place in the lives of artisans. Housing, centre for training, markets for products...its all happening for them... like a seed taking root from a bed of ashes.

With the DWARAKA family growing, another move is made in 2006 into this new centre. Equipped with computers and other aids, the environment is more conducive and contemporary to match the global needs.

From the Mecca of Kalamkari art - Srikalahasthi - to its worshippers in a chic DWARAKA showroom in Bangalore. New products of Kalamkari.

Purushottam's old house is crumbling, he pleads for a new house.

The first batch of artisans at the rented centre from where magical creations come alive on cloth through natural dyes.





Dwaraka's initiative made the Kalamkari artists realize the relevance of transforming their art into more contemporary forms, so that they could find their way into homes not only as creations of art but also as items of utility. Before the emergence of DWARAKA, majority of Kalamkari work took the form of wall panels, which had a limited and exhaustible market. DWARAKA worked to develop an entirely new and exclusive dimension to Kalamkari by designing a comprehensive product range that catered to the needs of a global market.

Artisans at work.





The process of making Kalamkari - ( clock-wise)

Gopi takes the washed cloth and dips it into a pail of milk.



The cloth is kneaded into a mix of milk and myrobolan powder.



The cloth must then be sun-dried, so it is spread on bare ground.



Sarasa and Amravathi sketch with charcoal bits.

### The magic of Kalamkari in the making

Vegetable dyes are used in hand-painted Kalamkari.

The cloth is then boiled to make the colours fast. The laborious and painstaking process continues till the painting is done again and completed.

All residue is wiped off the cloth.

Gopi and Nagaraj twirl the cloth in swirling waters, earlier this was done in the now dry Swarnamukhi river.

Kumari outlines with a 'kalam' on the drawing .







Artisans at work from Enaguluru, V M Palli and Srikalahasti.



An important aspect of the economic empowerment effort was to set up a separate Community Development Fund from the market sales, in addition to the regular earnings of the artisans. The artisans were mobilized into smaller groups to facilitate the utilisation of the Fund, each group maintaining its own bank account. This fund is a blessing, especially for the women who have discovered a new sense of economic independence.







Beautiful mirrors, photo frames, lamp shades, stationary items, sarees, dress material, stoles, cushion covers, purses, handbags, greeting cards and a plethora of other innovative and stylish products adorn the shelves of the DWARAKA showroom, catching the eye of many ready buyers. The showroom provides new Kalamkari products the much needed access to markets.

An array of products at the DWARAKA showroom.









DWARAKA also worked for meeting the community's need for improved infrastructure, medical care and shelters, extending its activities beyond the mere support to Kalamkari art and artisans.

Today, the DWARAKA artisans in Srikalahasthi stand tall as one united community. There is a new found sense of belonging, self-respect, security and dignity. Slowly but surely poverty is giving way to prosperity; hunger is being replaced with contentment, and knowledge is replacing the darkness of ignorance.

The dying art of hand-painted Kalamkari is becoming young again - reversing the onslaught of poverty and urbanization. Oppression and exploitation are now a thing of the past as the artisans and weavers of Srikalahasthi and Enagaluru villages, now joined by a group of young dalit girls from V M Palli, are all confidently ascending the ladder of socio-economic and cultural empowerment.







Kanchana

## KANCHANA

They weave sarees that would make any woman crave to possess them. They weave creations that are treasured down generations and yet, they are themselves the victims of neglect and abuse.

This is the plight of many a weaver family in Srikalahasthi and Venkatagiri. Caught deep in the cycle of debt, each and every movement on their loom entrenches them deeper into a situation from where they cannot get out. The strain of weaving under the present conditions cripples their bodies. Their sustenance is dependent on the middlemen who often give them barely enough to survive and hold them in their vice like grip.

Like the other weavers, Kanchana's family too suffered the same fate.

In this situation, Kanchana was desperate and asked Anita if she could learn Kalamkari art and the rest, as they say, is history. She became part of the DWARAKA group, learnt the skill and began to work earning money. Since then, not only has Kanchana's life changed, but also her entire family's.

All smiles - Kanchana with her colleagues at the DWARAKA unit.



A quiet, shy girl when she first joined DWARAKA, she has blossomed into a self-confident and self-reliant young lady with a deep commitment to improving her artistic skills, as she works towards perfection.

The Ramanarpanam Trust supports others in her family, including her brother Sreenivas, a weaver, who was given financial aid to acquire skills in the mobile phone repairing vocation, enabling him to earn additional money for his family. Their father, Venkateshwarlu was one amongst many in the Bhaskarpeta area of Srikalahasthi who repaid a revolving fund grant given by DRRT to a group of weavers.

Kanchana, at times, earns between Rs. 3000/- to over Rs. 4,000/- per month, doing exquisite Kalamkari paintings. She is today a pillar of strength not only to her own family, but to the entire DWARAKA family.

Kanchana's mother spinning the yarn

Kanchana with her father, Venkateshwarlu and mother Kasturiamma and brother Sreenivas.

Kanchana works from home.

Kanchana with Raji and Anita at the DWARAKA unit, planning for the next phase of activity.





REKHA

Rekha and her sister Padmavathi were amongst the pioneering group of young girls who first learnt the Kalamkari art when DWARAKA was initiated. Even in the early months as training began, Rekha needed an emergency medical intervention to save her life from a critical heart ailment. She was admitted to Shimsha Hospital, near Tirupathi. It was nearing midnight when Anita went to visit her in the midst of a crisis..

For both of them, that visit felt like no ordinary visit. Rekha lay in a bed at the foothills of the pilgrim town of Tirupathi.

As they met, Anita and Rekha could feel an almost palpable presence of the Divine in their midst. As they looked out of the window from the hospital room they saw lights twinkling like diamonds on the mountain path leading to the temple of the Lord of the Seven Hills. Those lights set aflame, a surge of emotions in both of them, bonding them with hope and trust.

Rekha knew that only a surgery could save her. She was now ready for it. With the support of Ramanarpanam Trust, Rekha underwent a successful heart operation. Today she is happily married and is the mother of two.

The sisters say, "It is DWARAKA and the Ramanarpanam Trust that have touched our lives to make a difference. We thank Appa for his kindness. We live with a new hope now..."

Padu - as Padmavathi is called - happy to be able to support her family.



Padmavathi and Rekha, both sisters, had joined DWARAKA and trained to be Kalamkari artisans.

Padu, Rekha and Rekha's first born Vaishnavi.



Rekha after a successful operation supported by DRRT.





Sujata is the youngest of four siblings. She, and one of her older brothers are both hearing and speech impaired. It was a defeated Sujata when she first came to DWARAKA to join the growing ranks of artisans. Having blossomed into an excellent artisan, Sujatha confidently supports her entire family including her ageing parents. A brother recently met with a serious accident but recovered with the support of DRRT.



Rajagopal's father was an MLA in the constituency where he lived. Being an honest politician's son took a price on Rajagopal who lived a life of penury in this hut in the dalit village of Enaguluru. He was a skilled Kalamkari artist. DWARAKA supported him as a trainer who then went on to teach the art to other families in the village. Although he passed away recently, his daughter, continues to earn for the family by doing Kalamkari art for DWARAKA. DRRT also supports her brother's higher education.



Shivayya and his wife Gnanamma, along with his sons Bhaskar and Jagadish weave beautiful sarees. However, the dept trap did not elude them and soon they were in dire need of support to survive and sustain themselves. With DWARAKA's intervention, their daughter Mohana became a good artist and it is her work now which is helping the family who also weave the cloth used by Kalamkari artists.





## SARASA BAI

Sarasa Bai is an empowered voice of her people, confident and assertive. She does not hesitate to speak up for artisans, especially if they are not treated properly. For instance, when young Kalamkari artisans, at the behest of the organizers in a craft fair were demonstrating their art skills one day, a participant at a neighbouring stall rudely told them to move away as their products emanated a pungent odour of paint and milk, something inherent to handpainted Kalamkari artwork.

While earlier, the artisans would have obliged and quietly moved away, Sarasa Bai, would have none of it. She calmly told the participants at the neighbouring stall that 'the stench' is a means of survival for them and that they would not move away from there. This self-assertion by Sarasa Bai, is rarely found in an artisan community that is usually compelled to be submissive.

Sarasa Bai has indeed been a pillar of strength in DWARAKA. Although from a poor family that had gone through many struggles, she has been the embodiment of stoic resilience. Sarasa's hard work has produced some of the most beautiful Kalamkari paintings and earns her Rs. 3000/- to over Rs. 4000/- in a month.

Ramanarpanam Trust also helped Sarasa's family with their shelter needs, and medical expenses. Her father is alive today, despite both kidneys failing suddenly one night, because of the timely support given by Ramanarpanam Trust, she says.

Sarasa is a confident young woman today, capable of representing the DWARAKA artisans in national exhibitions and like some of her other comrades, has the potential to make a mark on the international scene as well.



Sarasa and Kanchana - friendship and fraternity. Though belonging to an artisan community that was compelled to be submissive, Sarasa Bai has stood up for the community to assert their rights.

An empowered voice of her people, Sarasa's creations, have resulted in some of the most beautiful Kalamkari paintings that DWARAKA has produced.









## KARUNA - Kalamkari Artisans Revival and Upsurge for National Acclaim

KARUNA was initiated by DRRT to federate all the Kalamkari units in Srikalahasthi into a network. Around 353 artists and their families were brought onto this single platform to enable the implementation of a Government sponsored programme under the aegis of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. Rising to the challenging task of uniting an exploited community of artisans, DRRT catalysed between the artisans and the Government for the implementation of a Rs. 3.5 crore project for the development of Kalamkari clusters at Srikalahasthi. The artisans are now directly accessing and managing the funds on their own. KARUNA is also taking other initiatives to garner more support for the welfare of the Kalamkari artisans, especially for their sustained training in Kalamkari art form.

Empowering the artisan community with their rights to information about the project.

A historic day at Srikalahasthi - uniting all Kalamkari artisans under the KARUNA banner.







Srilakshmi with her colleagues from DWARAKA.

KARUNA



Srilakshmi.  
The smile of an empowered  
Kalamkari artisan.

Srilakshmi and her family had a new lease of life when she joined the pioneering group of DWARAKA artisans. As years passed by, she displayed a stoic resilience to stand by what was right for the organization, helping others as DWARAKA grew.

Her experience in DWARAKA stood her in good stead and she was elevated to the post of an office bearer, when she became the treasurer of the entire KARUNA federation.

She now handles money matters with other committee members with a dedication worthy of the trust placed in her by all the artisans.

Srilakshmi, treasurer of KARUNA, with Niranjan, the secretary, Krishnayya, the ex-president and Venkateshwaralu, an office bearer.





## SWECHA - Satsang Women's Empowerment Collective for Holistic Advancement

Muniamma, a stalwart in  
tribal Sugali handwork.

The Sugalis are a nomadic tribe who live in small hamlets called *thandas* in Madanapalli, Andhra Pradesh.

Over the years, these tribal communities, although endowed with ample skills, had little opportunities to develop.

Their innate prowess in traditional embroidery using beads and mirrors is absolutely stunning. However, their skills remained largely untapped as they did not have the opportunity to develop their potential and create a economically sustainable base for themselves.

DRRT joined hands with Satsang Foundation founded by Sri Mumtaz Ali of Madanapalli to form SWECHA.



Generation Next - Swapna and Kalpana are getting trained in threadwork.





The SWECHA community centre, built by DRRT, for the development of the Sugali community.



## SWECHA

SWECHA means the release of inner potential. Like its name, it aims to hone the talent of Sugali women and girls and to assist them in reproducing their art on contemporary garments and producing market friendly items.

Young *thanda* girls are being trained in embroidery, keeping alive the traditional legacy of Sugali art work while adapting to contemporary trends of the market.

DRRT has also supported Satsang Foundation in its education programmes for the children of Sugali families.

A community center has been constructed to facilitate different programs conducted by SWECHA. It has linked with DWARAKA to increase market opportunities and strengthen the network of economic empowerment in the villages of Chittoor district.

Somalamma, Raji and Muniamma.



Programmes to give training in tailoring and embroidery skills.





## Nacoldev



It was those who were selling the multi-hued beads that first caught Anita's eye. Fascinated by them and the colours of the beads, strung together in necklaces, bracelets and other trinkets, she came closer to see them.

That is when she first met the vendor of the beads, Srinivas, who was young, dynamic and enthusiastic. Along with him was his family and other members of his community. In addition to the handmade products made from beads, they were also selling mythological figurines.

Anita felt drawn to this small group of persons sitting in an uneven line on the pavement. Who were they, and what made her want to know them better? She soon learnt that they belonged to a nomadic community that lived off petty trades on the roadsides of Tirupathi and supplemented their livelihood by hunting rabbits and partridges.

Their sincerity and simplicity were more than obvious. That they were trying to make an honest livelihood, by selling their wares to the tourists and pilgrims that this famous temple town of Tirupathi attracts in thousands, was clearly visible.

Speaking to him, Anita realized that Srinivas, and others in his community were skilled enough to develop products that could be traded at a scale that would make their community lead a better life. However, as is the case with many such skilled artisan communities, they lacked the means to make their products more appealing to the mass market and the forum to market the products on a large scale.

The natural bond that was instantly created between Anita and Srinivas on their first meeting was to pave the way for a change in their lives. The first step towards this change was Anita's visit to Srinivas's house in Nakkal Colony where there were over 70 families of his community.

The overwhelming affection that Anita felt in this firm and sincere handshake with Thangavel, as Bangeluruamma and the children look on, is a reflection of the inner beauty of the community of Nakkala colony.





Sreenivas and his family who first met Anita near Tirupathi temple.

Supported by DRRT, this couple has opened a petty shop in their community and is now having a proper means of livelihood.



Flood relief support extended by DRRT at Nakkala colony. The DWARAKA team rose to the occasion and served the victims.

DRRT guided them into designing contemporary forms of bead jewellery, and supported their marketing. Today the colourful beads from Nakkal Colony adorn the shelves of DWARAKA showroom in Bangalore. Some of these beads are also used to enhance the Kalamkari products of DWARAKA.

Even as the families were empowered towards sustainable livelihoods and a secure future, nature's fury in the form of heavy rains struck their lives.

An adjacent lake that had remained dry for more than a decade was now overflowing and spilling into Nakkal colony. Many a home was ruined. The walls and roofs of their houses had soaked the rain water and weakened considerably. The housing had become unfit for dwelling as it started crumbling.

Ramanarpanam Trust immediately gave them relief after the natural calamity. It gave food and clothing to the community, and gradually initiated efforts to restart livelihood programmes.

As desired by the community, the Ramanarpanam Trust is investing in building of houses, and a temple in Nakkal Colony, located off the newly formed by pass road at Tirupathi. It is also building a school, thereby creating a base for meeting the educational needs of the children of Nakkal colony.

NACOLDEV's story is one of how a chance meeting with a member of an unknown tribal hamlet can bond one with an entire community and bring about a wide ranging change in their lives.



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

About a kilometer from the VIVEKA campus where the DRRT is setting up an educational institution, are the villages of Motlur, Golahalli and Nallakadirenahalli.



Bringing alive a new hope and vision for the Motlur village community.



### Motlur

Over a hundred dalit families live in Motlur village. For many years, they had been living in harmony with the forests, adjacent to the villages, eking a living by gathering and selling fallen twigs and branches as fuel wood. This source of income became irregular and less as depletion of the forest area and legal restrictions reduced their access to forests.

To supplement their income then, the women began to spin plastic cords from laminated plastic bags that were later sold in the village shanties.

For the people of Motlur who were struggling each day to make ends meet, there was something in the village that occupied the place of pride. This was the Government primary school that taught children from the first to the fifth standard. For the younger ones, DRRT initiated a pre-school and also identified members of the community, who were otherwise unemployed, and trained them to handle the responsibilities of the school and the community. DRRT is also providing the students with books and uniforms.

For the first time, in this small village, the people have been mobilized into an Association by DRRT and made aware of the relevance of collective self-governance. Today, people are beginning to actively participate in the decision making process and becoming more self-reliant.





## Golahalli

Golahalli comprises a community of around 30 families who depend on farming and rearing livestock. With DRRT initiating Viveka in the vicinity, new opportunities are now within the reach of these people. Some of them have found employment in the developing Viveka campus, while others are being mobilized to form self help groups. DRRT also supports education programs by providing scholarships.

Empowering women through increased participation.



DRRT organisers holding a village panchayat at Golahalli.





State of housing in the village.



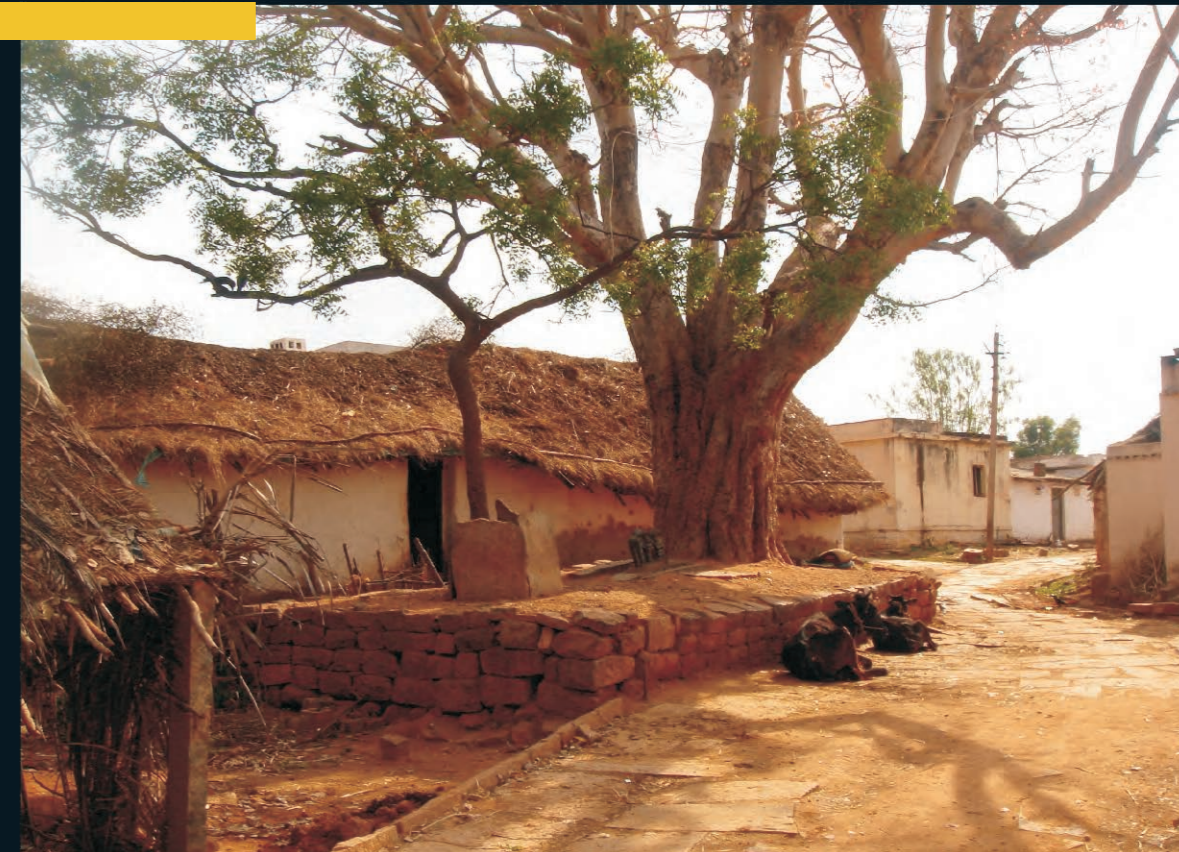
The idyllic village of Nallakadirenahalli.

## Nallakadirenahalli

Nallakadirenahalli, a village nestled between picturesque lakes and hillocks is about 13 kms from Chikkaballapur, and has over a hundred families. Its remote location denies it adequate access to essential services such as transport and health, especially in times of emergency.



Anita meets with the village community and leaders.







Empowerment programmes for adolescent girls at Nallakadirenahalli.



Learning new skills, they are becoming economically independent.



The opportunities for socio-economic development are limited in villages such as these. DRRT has taken its initiative into this far flung village, and is mobilizing the community towards development and self governance.

Sustainable livelihoods programmes such as courses in tailoring are being held for the young girls in Nallakadirenahalli. Today, they are taking confident first steps towards self-reliance and have the choice of joining the garment industry or working on their own.

A health camp in progress.



DRRT, along with Sarvodaya Trust, is building a community centre that will be primarily used as a health centre. It is bridging links with hospitals in the town of Chikkaballapur to ensure access to medical care at the village itself. Health camps have been initiated and some of the chronic cases have been supported in terms of referrals to specialty hospitals in Bangalore.

The people of Nallakadirenahalli have also been mobilized into forming a community association and that, together with other initiatives, has helped bridge caste issues and gender biases. Today, there is strength in their collectivism.





## MGR Nagar

Set in the backdrop of the sacred Arunachala hill, MGR Nagar, a semi urban community in the outskirts of Tiruvanmalai, inspired an intervention from DRRT when its team found that many of the families here were in need of succour and new means of livelihoods for sustenance.

It also recognized a dire need for interventions in health care, shelter and in education, especially for the pre-school children.

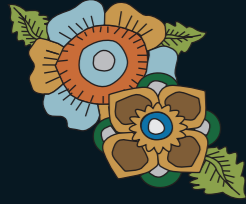
Work began by establishing self-help groups, who were supported by the seed capital grants given by DRRT. These groups acquired vocational skills and set up micro level enterprises. For example, a youth group used the seed capital money to learn driving and get gainful employment, while women's groups invested in establishing dairy farming unit.

Forced to live in abysmally dismal and unhygienic surroundings, this boy used to make a living tending to the livestock in the piggery.



DRRT helped form self-help groups to enable people to resolve their problems. It also enhanced women's awareness and set up empowerment processes.





Adjacent to MGR Nagar is an impoverished area called Melthikka where the housing conditions were deplorable. DRRT convinced the authorities concerned and were able to relocate some of the families to MGR Nagar.

A community centre is also being proposed here.

DRRT's major intervention in MGR Nagar has been the Early Childhood Development School. Children between three and six years of age bond together under its roof and express their creative skills through story telling, drawing and painting. They also enjoy nutritious food as they play and learn during the day.

Their parents, toiling in the fields or on construction sites, attend to their work secure in the knowledge that their children are being taken care of by gentle and caring hands.

Children of the Early Childhood Development Centre initiated by DRRT at MGR Nagar.



Supporting higher education and preventing school dropouts.

Happy parents watching their wards at the pre-school.





## Tsunami Rehabilitation

When the waves of the destructive tsunami ravaged the Eastern Indian coastline, DRRT was among those who intervened and started work in the more neglected coastline of the Andhra border near the town of Nellore.

Many in the fishing communities staying in villages of Isakapally, Salt Bungalow Colony and Kothur had lost all sources of livelihoods, including their nets and boats.

There was a need not just for economic rehabilitation but also psychological healing of minds ravaged by this shocking tragedy. DRRT quickly organized the community, rebuilding confidence, rebuilding homes and rebuilding livelihoods.

DRRT recognized the need for the fisherfolk to take their own decisions and mobilize themselves for proactive rehabilitation. The people soon got involved in all aspects of rebuilding their lives. Perhaps one of the happiest moments in this whole process was when the community of over a 100 families in Salt Bungalow colony, went and put their new nets in the sea and hauled in the catch of a lifetime that had rarely been seen for years in this coastline.

Scarred by the tsunami, a resident of Nagapattinam.



As months passed by, DRRT came across the genuine work being done by Revathy, a Chennai based film maker who had promptly responded to the urgent need for relief. Revathy established the Vanavil school for the kids of the affected.

DRRT supported her efforts in the development of the school and in reviving livelihoods. These communities at Nagapattinam were into trading of plastic utility items. DRRT's support enabled them to revive their trading enterprises.

Establishing livelihoods with support from DRRT.

Revathi, a rare and committed woman remains in Nagapattinam after having established the Vanavil school for children affected by the tsunami. DRRT, along with MAIS and NUTRINE, extended their support to the rehabilitation programme.







Slum communities in Bangalore, victims of floods, fires, demolitions, living in fear and insecurity.

## DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES



Dwaraknath Reddy visits Ganganagar slum accompanied by members of KKNSS, a state level slum dwellers federation.

Years of hard work by AVAS had impacted the development of various slum communities in Bangalore. Yet, there was still many a void that needed to be filled. Some of the slums did not even have potable drinking water or proper toilets, a dire need for adolescent girls and women. Some areas did not have proper shelter; others lacked health care services, even during emergencies when lives hung between life and death. Many a child who had completed their schooling and had dreams of going in for higher education just did not have the financial support to live their dreams.

It was in response to meet these multiple needs that DRRT began work in many of the urban slums of Bangalore. Together with AVAS, DRRT impacted many lives.



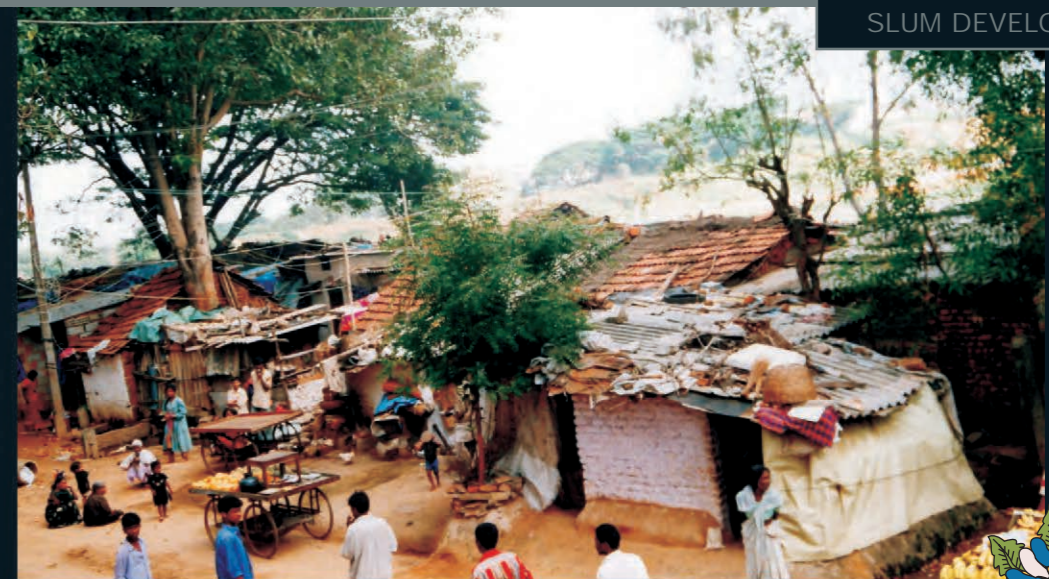




Providing construction materials for housing.



Removing the old, making way for the new.



Sanyasikunte slum as it is.



New homes being constructed in Sanyasikunte.



DRRT facilitates housing in MRS Palya slum by providing revolving grants for down payment without which housing could not have begun.

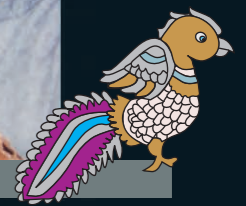


## Housing

Thatched huts catching fire. Slums waking up to drives of demolition. A family needing help to rebuild a collapsing hut. These are but a few of the realities that people living in the slums in Bangalore often face.

DRRT, extending its support in response to crisis situations has ensured a secure shelter for many families living in the slums of Koramangala, Vyalikaval Chowdiah, G Byapanahalli, Ganganagar and Sanyasikunte. It facilitated housing in these areas by setting up a revolving capital as initial down payments were needed to take forward the housing projects. In some cases, it also helped families by giving them construction materials to build their houses.





One of DRRT's first interventions in Bangalore slums was in response to an urgent need from the people in Ganganagar slum to facilitate housing and to protect them from the imminent threat of demolitions. At the behest of KKNSS, Dwaraknath Reddy visited the community and a small act of reaching out with support spurred a self-help housing project of a large scale.







## Infrastructure - basic amenities

Trudging three to four kilometers everyday to fetch two pots of potable water had become a way of life for nearly seven hundred families living in G Byappanahalli slum.

DRRT revived defunct borewells and created a network of 48 water taps at different locations in the community. Slowly, water started flowing from these taps bringing joy in the hearts of women who earlier had to begin their day sometimes at even three in the morning in order to fetch water.

For a people who longed and yearned for a glass of water in the past, the sight of water gushing from taps was reason for joyful celebrations.

Anjali, a leader in the area said, "Now 70% to 80% of all our problems have been mitigated. DRRT has given us water, our lifeline, and saved us so many hours in a day which we can now use constructively."

Forty eight water taps were provided, four defunct borewells were rejuvenated and connected in G Byappanahalli slum for 683 families by DRRT.



Dwaraknath Reddy in Janashakthi Nagar, providing much needed water connections to the community. 24 taps quench the thirst of people in the area.





Introducing door-to-door garbage collection in G Byappanahalli and enabling healthy living surroundings.



Toilets in G Byappanahalli slum, supported by RDRT and BELC-31.

Support was given by Ranjini Dwaraknath Reddy Trust along with BELC 31 to construct 24 community toilets in G Byappanahalli slum that truly reduced the misery, especially for the women and adolescent girls who earlier had to use adjacent parthenium fields, often under the cover of darkness, as their toilet spaces. While earlier, incidents of attempts of rape and molestation by men lurking in the fields were not uncommon, all of that became a thing of the past.

Toilet blocks were also constructed by DRRT for the women of Sanyasikunte slum and the girl children in Ramagondanahalli Government school in Varthur.

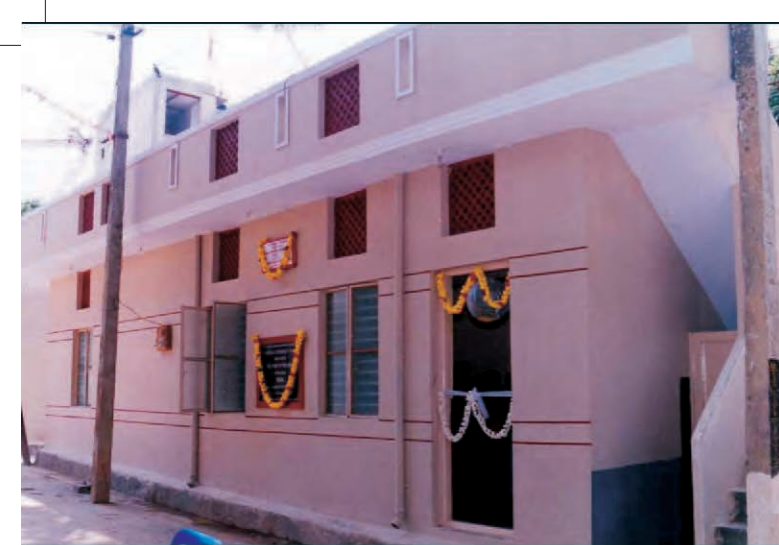
Electricity to illuminate homes, drains to keep environments clean and hygienic, better paved pathways, and enhancing the aesthetics of slums, are but a few of the amenities facilitated by DRRT for the poor.

Providing underground drainage and water connections in houses in slum communities.



Conditions of drains before DRRT's intervention.





SLUM DEVELOPMENT

The community centre at Bhandhavyanagar. (erstwhile Parsi Garden slum)

Community centre at Vyalikaval slum, used also as a Drishya spoke.

Community centre at Koramangala constructed along with the support of Sarvodaya International Trust, Karnataka chapter.

Community centre at Krishnainapalya slum, done by RDRT.

## Community Centres

The construction of community centres in slums areas such as Vyalikaval Chowdiah, Krishnainapalya, G M Palya, and Bandhyavyanagar have impacted in enhancing various activities in these communities, including implementation of programmes like the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme of the Central Government) for early childhood development, skills training for adolescent girls, and health camps for women. The Vyalikaval Chowdiah Community centre is also used as a Drishya spoke centre.



Smt. Indiramma of the Nutrine Confectionary family, Anita's aunt, inaugurates the Bhandavyanagar Centre.



A small centre at G M Palya slum.

The school at MRS Palya slum, renovated and reconstructed.

SWECHA Centre at Madanapalli.

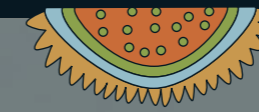


SLUM DEVELOPMENT

DRRT chose to change that with a small but dynamic intervention. It put up a temporary shed using tin sheets by the road-side utilizing the adjacent wall of a temple. This shelter was sufficient to start an early childhood development centre for a number of children.

There was now space to cook and provide them with a mid day meal, play games and learn other activities sheltered against rain and sun. However, the saga of this centre did not end there. Elite neighbours complained to the police and for many consecutive days, the centre would be pulled down by them, only to be reconstructed by the community. If down it came one evening, up it went the next morning and the school ran as usual. Subsequently, the community rebuilt it. It is now proposed that a new centre will be built for the children after the implementation of the housing programme. Until then, the fun and learning go on.

The children of the Sanyasikunte slum seemed doomed to roam the unclean, garbage ridden streets in their community without any hope or opportunity to mitigate their suffering. This changed with DRRT's intervention.





Providing medicines to a weekly clinic at G Byappanahalli slum.

Venkatesh, a 6<sup>th</sup> standard student of MRS Palya school is an ardent tabla player. Diagnosed with a critical heart ailment, his health condition was becoming serious. DRRT contributed towards a pooled resource of funds for Venkatesh to have his surgery.



DRRT provided an opportunity for running an Ayurvedic clinic with Dr Prabha at the Vyalikaval Chowdiah slum.

## Health

'Health for all' is the slogan, but what is the reality for the poor?

If access to proper health care is out of bounds for many a family living in the slums, then for those living in remote villages, not only is it inaccessible, it is also unaffordable. Doubling their burden, in times of emergencies, the poor are confronted by the dark spectre of corruption snatching away any hope of recovery or treatment in the hospitals.

For those who live in such despair, DRRT has been the beacon of light saving the lives of many and healing the wounds of those in need.



Innumerable accident victims have been given emergency medical support as well as legal help for the follow through of accident compensation.







Selvaraj, a cobbler from Lakshmipuram slum who had a heart problem.

### SELVARAJ

Anita had known Selvaraj ever since she walked into Lakshmipuram slum 28 years ago. She remembers him as a well built youth who had mobilized others like him to form a youth association and address issues related to their land and shelter rights.

In his own words, Selvaraj says, "I have been a leader in this area for 25 years. Some years ago, I felt pain in my chest but I ignored it till it became rather difficult to breathe and I became very uncomfortable. I was then diagnosed to have an artery block and advised angioplasty. I went to Manipal hospital where they said that the treatment for my heart ailment will cost Rs. 65,000/- to Rs. 70,000/-.

I am a cobbler by profession and did not have a penny to pay the hefty amounts asked towards my treatment. I ran from pillar to post till my health condition became critical. Amma heard about this and she came to save me. She gave the money for the surgery and admitted me in Manipal hospital. And today I am able to live a healthy life once more, because of DRRT's timely support during times of crisis. It has saved my life."



### TANUJA

One day, as Anita was driving down, she stopped at the signal at the cross roads. Two hands suddenly thrust a small bag of vegetables into the car and took Anita by surprise as she could not see the person who had given her the vegetables.

Then a voice said, "Amma, that day, you so willingly came forward and saved my daughter's life by giving support from DRRT. Today, I got a chance to express to you my gratitude by giving you these vegetables. Please take them home and cook a good meal for your family."

That was Ashwathappa. Anita was happy to see him again and this time in a happy frame of mind. She remembered the time when she first met him. Ashwathappa had come with his daughter, Tanuja, a young girl of about 8 years, who had to undergo an hernia operation. Though he had set aside some amount of money, it was still inadequate. Ashwathappa was a worried man then. But that soon changed.

DRRT promptly gave the support required for the treatment of Tanuja, who started attending school soon after she recovered from the surgery. It is such a joy to see the happy child.



Tanuja with her father, in need of support for a hernia surgery.





MALLESH

Anita was in the vicinity of the Sadashivanagar Public Swimming pool. There was a strong smell emanating in the neighbourhood. It was one of septic, reminding one of unhealed wounds. Anita walked towards it to find Mallesh. He had leprosy and oozing wounds on a leg that was so deeply infected that not only had gangrene set in but the eggs and the squiggling larvae of maggots eating into the flesh was visible. Even more horrifying was the image of maggots flying out from the flesh. That is where the stench was from.

No one would pick Mallesh to take him to the doctor. Anita did. That and his immediate hospitalization saved him from a miserable and paralysed end.

Mallesh was operated upon and the doctors amputated his leg to save him. All through this, DRRT took complete care. Post surgery, and till he recovered in body and spirit, DRRT helped him to get crutches and a Jaipur leg that enabled him to walk again.

Mallesh would not live off begging anymore; he knew that he could work and earn his living and for that he sought support to help him set up a cement pot making and selling enterprise.

After over a decade since the amputation of his leg, he was diagnosed to have infection by HIV. Unfortunately, having neglected it over the years, unknowingly, Mallesh had begun to waste away while still struggling to keep his enterprise alive for his only son, Deepak.

In his last days, DRRT provided him all support required for care in the hospitals. Mallesh left this world knowing that his son Deepak, who had also been diagnosed with HIV, would be in good hands and with that thought, his life ended peacefully.



Mallesh, a cripple who learnt to stand tall after DRRT helped him to get crutches and an artificial leg that enabled him to walk again.

HELPING THE CHALLENGED.

Visually challenged, hearing impaired, without limbs, paralysed and despairing they sought help.

DRRT never said no and always rose to the need - the limbless became mobile, the blind could see again, and the sounds of the world came alive to those who could never hear before.





## Education

DRRT's support towards the education needs of the poor has been endless. Providing support for strengthening infrastructure in schools has been an important aspect of DRRT's work.

Giving scholarships to poor students, enabling their higher education, ensuring there are no dropouts due to their inability to buy uniforms, shoes or books etc. are all ways in which DRRT has been giving additional support under the DRIK banner.



Venkatesh, Manjunath and Sunil from Motlur and Golahalli villages are pursuing college education at Chikkaballapur, with support from DRRT.





### Economic empowerment

DRRT has facilitated several programmes to enhance vocational skills that have led to gainful employment. Many groups of adolescent girls, especially those who have dropped out of schools, have greatly benefited by these programmes.

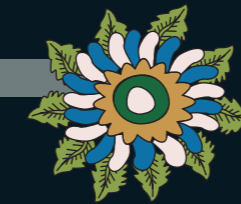
Paper bag making, tailoring, beautician courses and agarbatti stick making are some of the activities in which the girls have been trained and are earning a supplementary income.

Many families have also been given push carts, auto rickshaws, cycles, mechanic tools to supplement their incomes.



Tailoring and paper bag making in Koramangala slum.

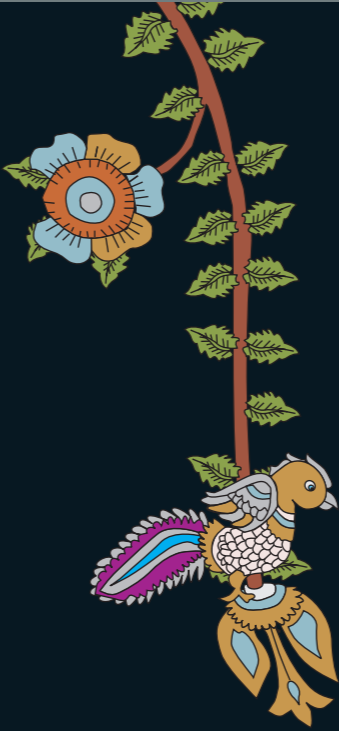
Vegetable and fruit vendors were given push carts in Vyalikaval Chowdiah slum.



A small cycle shop in G Byappanahall slum.







DRRT has made a difference in the lives and livelihoods of the people. Irrespective of the scale and challenges of the initiative, it has forged ahead in service of the poor and the needy.

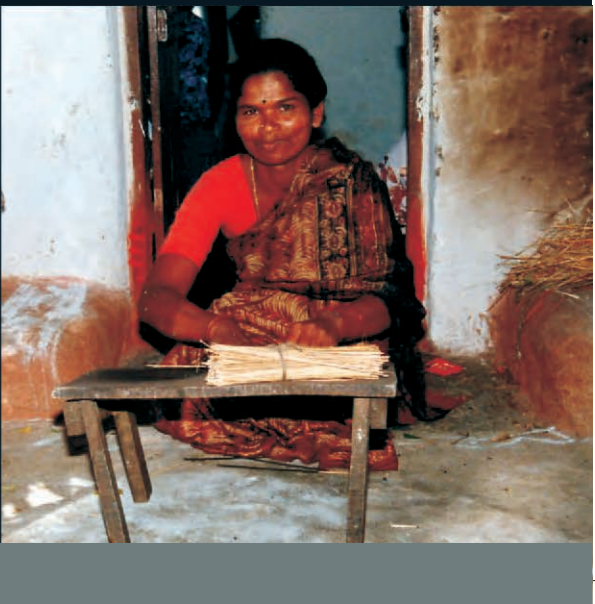


Tailoring in Nallakadirenahalli village.

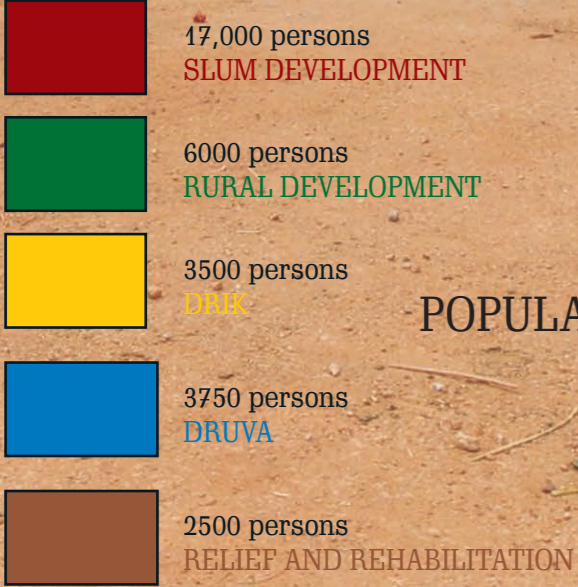
A mobile 'restaurant' in Sanyasikunte slum.

Agarbatti rolling in Sanyasikunte slum.

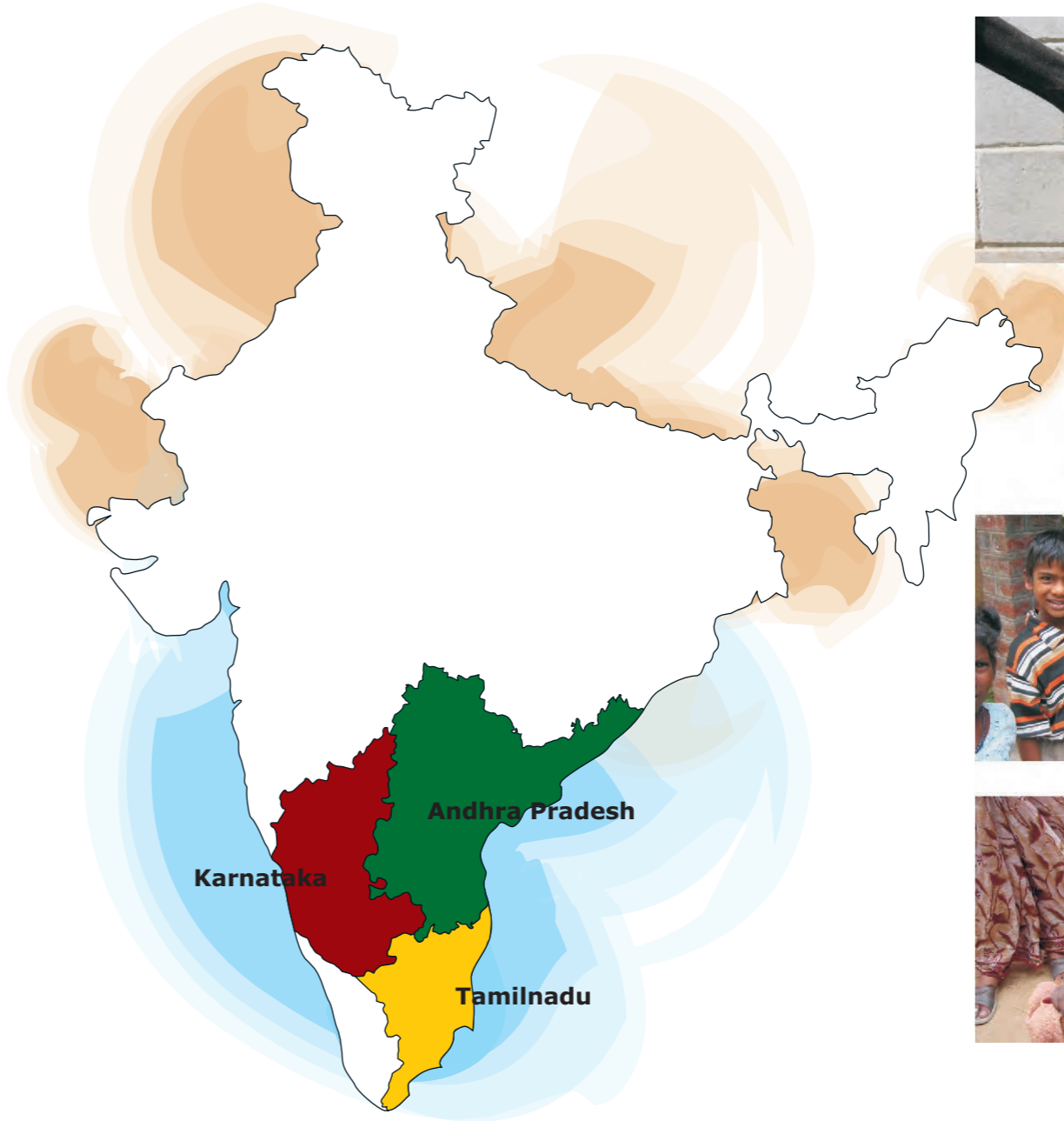
Saree trading in Bhandhavyanagar slum







POPULATION IMPACTED (Approx.)  
1996 - 2006



DRRT is touching lives in the three Southern States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu in India.



## AN ANGEL NAMED RAMYA

Anita first saw little Ramya, an 8 year old child, chattering happily with different patients, in the women's ward of Bowring Hospital. Ramya, as Anita learnt later, was there taking care of her mother Ratnamma who was suffering from T.B.

Ramya not only tended to her ailing mother, but also brought cheer to every patient in the ward with her care and concern. She would wash the dishes of all the patients and volunteer to wash their clothes. After helping those in need, she would sit down to eat a morsel herself.

Ratnamma had lost her husband in a lorry accident when Ramya was about a year old. Struggling to make ends meet, she brought up Ramya until she fell ill.



DRRT chose to support this beautiful child and her mother. She was assisted in finding a humble shelter and given support to earn a livelihood selling fruits and vegetables.

While continuing to help Ratnamma with health care, Anita also ensured that Ramya continued her education. The child must not lack opportunities, Anita felt, drawing a strength and learning from Ramya's kindness in the hospital ward.

Ramya had shown the way to heal with love, and this little angel with a large heart had smiled her way into every human soul.

Ramya feeding her ailing mother in Bowring Hospital.

She then cleans the dishes...and washes the clothes not just her mother's but other patients too...

she feeds another unknown patient...

...and then sits down to eat a morsel.





## From Anita Reddy

Every day, there is a harvest of love.

As Kannamma, 73 years old, and Vellachiamma, 80 years old, clapped their hands in joy and pranced up the stairs of their new homes, being constructed in Sanyasikunte slum, I knew that over 16 years of struggles for a secure shelter for these families was worth all the challenges faced by me and my team.

For the first time in many years, Nabeesa, an aged woman at CSI slum, saw the world, not as a blur of moving images but sharp and clear as could be. DRRT had helped her to regain her vision after an eye operation.

As Nabeesa, hugged me, overcome with emotion, her happiness and gratitude, love and blessings, could all be felt at the same time.

It is these intense experiences day after day, month after month, year after year that have been the greatest awards of working with poorer communities and families.

For, every day, I meet a Nabeesa.

At times she is by the water taps that we put in thirsty and dry communities, at other times she is the child whose life was saved after being afflicted by a life threatening disease. At times, she can be found sleeping under the comfort of a secure roof, owned by her, her mind no longer traumatized with fear of impending demolitions.

DRRT has tried to be there whenever it has heard cries for help and support. Cries of communities that had been mercilessly demolished and shabbily rehabilitated; and cries of families who had no access even to drinking water.



DRRT has strived to eradicate the suffering of so many that each such project implemented became a self motivating desire to do more. This desire took shape in many ways. It also gave rise to many more challenges, one's vision had to be redefined in a larger perspective and yet I could not lose sight of how it was as important to comfort a single family in need.

Striking the balance between these needs, gradually, and one step at a time, foundations were laid for institutions one after another, bringing linkages between urban slums and villages, linkages between states, between communities and between families.

At times, I know the journey has just begun.

A journey that sees new foundations being laid, new milestones being crossed, replacing despair with hope and desolation with courage. Helping me make this journey even more special are my co-travellers, journeying with me, in spirit and thought and action. Some began the journey with me, others have joined me midway. A family that stoically stood by me, friends who believe in me and share my dreams, and associates who give those dreams a shape.

The journey over 28 years to touch the lives of those who had not been as privileged was not a path of rose petals. But then it were the thorns that reminded me of the beauty of the rose. Accepting brickbats and bouquets with equal grace was my humble offering to the feet of Bhagavan, and to the love of my father, my guiding light. And above all, to those beautiful people from whom I drew my inspiration, DRRT exists for the Nabeesas and Ramyas of India.

Anita Reddy





## Acknowledgements



As we come to the closing pages of this book, thoughts of many like you come to mind. Some have walked this marathon, hand-in-hand with DRRT, others have cheered us on from the sidelines. Together, we have won the first leg of this race.

It must continue in the tomorrows too, as your concern and support is always important to us. If your name is not found here, its not that you have been forgotten. The limitations of a book have prevented me from including it here. Your contribution has been etched in one's memory though.

To each one of you, this book is an expression of our deepest gratitude and thanks.

Anita Reddy



### Raji Narayan

For being that pillar of support to all of us at DWARAKA. For being with us as we revived and repainted the canvas of life for young women Kalamkari artisans, coaxing them to believe in their innate talent, and ensuring that the best art was produced by them. For her relentless perseverance to make orders happen, at times in the most trying of circumstances, and her unwavering commitment to quality. And of course, for her willingness to survive the blazing hot Andhra summers, sometimes under tin roofs! For just being an integral part of the DWARAKA's winning team.

Humbled by her sincerity and dedication to DWARAKA, DRRT acknowledges Raji's selfless service.



### Geetha Narayanan

For shaping the future of education for the poor, and for keeping the faith alive in their tomorrows, by nurturing leadership in the children from the slums. For sharing our dream for a world filled with laughter and happiness for every child. For making the 'good better, the better best and the best, even better,' through Drishya ,by changing education into an empowering reality. For being 'Geetha Amma' to all of us.

DRRT salutes Geetha's indomitable spirit, drive and commitment to steering the future of our children.



### R Ramakrishnan

For throwing challenges at us and always believing that we could conquer them. For sustaining the confidence and lending a shoulder in the hour of crisis. For ensuring that we never forget our commitment to making a rupee become a hundred for the poor, and for being that 'role model of accountability', as our financial advisor. For all his support and advice, to a friend who always 'took the bull by the horn'!

DRRT acknowledges Ram's contribution towards the development of the downtrodden, and thanks him for his dedicated support.





### Anju Chandrashekhar

For being the embodiment of selfless sacrifice and generosity, for her magnanimity coupled with humility and for extending sustainable support to the Drishya education movement with contributions from the Rajeev Chandrasekhar Foundation.

DRRT thanks Anju for believing in and supporting the Drishya effort.



### N P Samy and Ruth Manorama

For accepting me as a friend in a triangle where they were the other two. For their vision, and their courage to chart a course establishing the rights of the poor. For walking hand-in-hand together, with me, for over two decades, struggle after struggle, establishing the rights of the oppressed. For their stoic resilience and sustained drive. Also, for their patient listening to my million phone calls!

DRRT expresses its gratitude to Mano and Pakkiri.



### Kirtee Shah

For his never -say -die spirit and his deep desire to always want to help others; for his immense faith in our activities, spurring us to inspired action. For cleaning all those cobwebs out of one's head, for polishing those sharp edges and ensuring that we always strove for perfection.

DRRT thanks Kirtee for his knowledgeable advice and guidance.



### Dr. A Ravindra

For caring so humbly for the poor, for his transparent concern to help find solutions for struggles of those living in slums and for his consistent reaching to those in need. For bringing hope into the darkest hovels of this city, and for all his support to us.

DRRT salutes Dr. Ravindra, a true officer and a real gentleman.



### Prof Jagadish, Dr. Raghunath and Sharada

For their unflinching support to AVAS in the past and to DRRT at the Kandawara Government school renovation project. For their genuine concern towards the poor and for instilling the courage in us to take the first step at Kandawara, our thanks to Professor Jagadish, Dr. Raghunath and Sharada.



### LOA and AIF

To Chandrika for holding on to her dream to promote sustainable livelihoods in different parts of the world. Her dream has touched as far as the Kalamkari artists of DWARAKA. To Ramya for keeping things together and making them happen. For Benita who has humbled us with her sincerity and drive and helping DWARAKA get on to the global market- to all of them, and the rest of the LOA and AIF team

DRRT expresses appreciation and thanks for your efforts.







RDR Trust reaffirms its commitment to tread the path of service, keeping alive the warm and giving tradition that you so naturally brought to 'Kaivalya', our home in Chittoor. Touching lives, Amma, and remembering that life is but a tear and a smile.

**RANJINI DWARAKNATH REDDY TRUST**  
Dedicated to the memory of Ranjini Reddy.



Salutations to one who was simple, beautiful and true.

The people of Lakshmpuram slum still remember 'Ranjini Amma', Anita's mother, with fond memories. Wanting to capture the essence of this remembrance, Anita established the RDR Trust. The work done by RDR Trust has begun to impact the lives of many, especially women, in the slums of Bangalore.





### Vikram Reddy

Taking over the responsibility of developing and running Nutrine Confectionery from his uncle, Dwaraknath Reddy over two and half decades ago, Vikram Reddy steered it further into national eminence. Whether, as the Managing Director of Nutrine Confectionery, in the past, or as the Trustee of DRRT in the present, it is Vikram's all encompassing and omnipotent love for all living beings, his values of selfless giving in total surrender, and his motto of service in all that he does, that guides DRRT's work with the poor.

Vikram, strong, gentle and full of love and laughter, is the pillar of strength in DRRT.



### Pratap Reddy

Grounded like the 'Rock of Gibraltar', Pratap Reddy, Managing Director of Universal Group, is a Trustee of DRRT. His stoic approach to resolving issues, his open willingness to support every cause furthering the development of the poor, and his balanced acceptance of the rose and the thorn with equal grace, make Pratap a most dependable support at DRRT. Driven by the values imbibed from his father, a freedom fighter, Pratap is committed to the spirit of liberating the poor.



### Vasudevan

Vasudevan the Senior Vice President Finance, Nutrine for his exemplary management of all DRRT finance matters, and for his sustained guidance and advice on keeping a 'cheque' on the the 'balance'! For ensuring that there would always be enough flow of funds to keep all of DRRT's dreams alive.



### The AVAS team

AVAS, about as old as my eldest child, has been an integral part of my life, from the time I was a youth to date. Nurturing it with a passion was my honour. Sharing that joy with the AVAS trustees Tara Chandavarker, Dharini Srinivasan and Kedar Diwakar was a pleasure. Above all, working with and guiding the AVAS team of Rahath, Glory, Nagarajaiah, Gretta, Siraj, Ramesh, Pampapathi, Theresa and other colleagues, new and old, especially the support staff from the communities to their hour of glory, was not just a privilege, but also extremely challenging and fun. The unwavering efforts of the senior team members for those many years are acknowledged with thanks and appreciation.







### The DRRT team

For a team that is still young and learning, the DRRT staff, adhering to the vision and values set out by the organization has indeed achieved a lot in a short span of time. Most of the team members, actively involved for barely two to five years, have networked the different institutions and various activities of DRRT with a dynamism and energy that enthuses and inspires thousands.

To the DRRT family of activists, organizers, facilitators, administrators and friends, way to go.







### Indiramma, Pulicherla

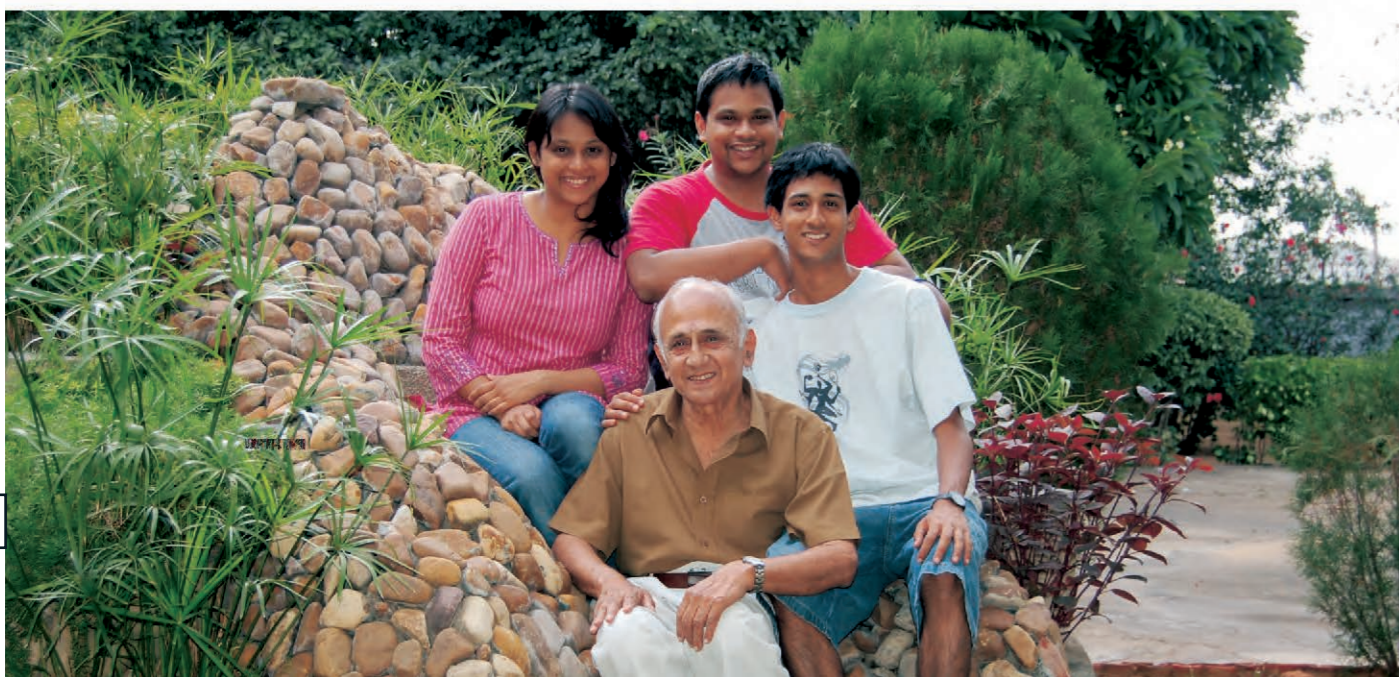
To my 'peddamma', my aunt who gave me love with no expectations, and taught me to embrace all living things with an outpouring of compassion. To my 'mother', my role model, the very embodiment of kindness and divinity.



### Pooja, Siddharth, Raam and Pratap, of course -

Always, and, for always, having stood by me for the cause of the poor.

For my husband Pratap, for taking me for who I am, as I am. For my children Pooja, Siddharth and Raam for being my inspiration. As the sun rose and as the sun set, day after day, my family got to see so little of me because I would have been fighting a slum demolition, or running to save a child in need or just sitting in a hut consoling a grandmother- and yet they never demanded or asked of me for themselves. For always giving, and for making me feel so special about what I am doing. For being my best friends, always.



### Ere Gowda

For Ere Gowda for his relentless energy, his willingness to respond to every need as we wrote this book, for his efforts on the computer, and for staying awake night after night picking up and dropping people around the city, our thanks and appreciation.

### Book in the making

Uma Swamy and Anitha Reddy who ended my 20 years search for someone to help me document our dreams and actions. For all those evenings when we could laugh together, between chips and colas, and yet bring alive a story to share with the world. For their sensitivity to the issues, and a visible concern in their responses.

To Ranjit who refreshed us with his support, his easy sense of humour and jokes, and of course the tasty potato salad!







“ I see a rainbow straddling my life,  
Its pastel shades a new delight.  
At journey's end I fear no chasm now -  
My feet can walk the rainbow heavenwards.”

DWARAKNATH REDDY