

SARVASHUBHAMKARA



*“All the joy of this world derives from the wish for another’s joy;
all the suffering of this world derives from the wish for one’s own joy.”*

[C8th Bodhicharyavatara VIII:129]

SARVA NEWSLETTER 2017



Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is hard to imagine being denied access to education, health care, employment or ordinary social integration for no other reason than your parents, or even grandparents, once contracted a curable bacterial disease. And yet this is what Sarva is challenging and changing, one student at a time.

As we now approach our twelfth year, we would therefore like to take the opportunity to thank all of you for your continued interest in our work amongst some of India’s poorest and most harshly ostracised people.

Through the generosity of our supporters, to date we have been able to give £112,000 in scholarships, ensuring that yet more young men and women from leprosy backgrounds have access to good quality education and training that leads to secure employment. The pattern of generations of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, disease, exclusion and suffering is being broken. The lives of these young people are being changed in ways that will last for generations to come.

We are delighted to report, for example, that two of our Hotel Management graduates, **Ajay** and **Anurag**, are now working in Dubai and New Zealand. Both are earning well and helping to support their families in India. In Delhi, meanwhile, **Sonu** has been promoted to the position of Senior Executive for Guest Experience at one of the city’s best hotels.

All fourteen of our nursing and midwifery graduates are now employed in good hospitals across North India. **Sushila**, for example, is Staff Nurse at the training hospital of the Swami Rama Himalayan University.



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Our most recent graduates – **Gita, Pushpa, Radha** and **Shakuntala** are now employed in three states. Gita has chosen to work in a specialist respiratory centre, whilst Radha is already applying for the position of Staff Nurse in Delhi.

Purushottam, our first male nursing student – a rarity in India – has the position of Staff Nurse at an award-winning Institute of Medical Sciences, which prides itself in providing '*Neuro, Cardio, Gastro, Renal, Trauma and Critical Care in a compassionate manner*'. He recently returned to Nepal to visit his leprosy-afflicted family, all of whom are immensely proud of him – as are we.



Minnie is Sarva's first Psychiatric nurse. She now works in a team of just three nurses and one caretaker in a facility that holds 122 women. Under the previous administration, these patients had been abused, assaulted and trafficked by the facility staff. When the scandal was exposed and many of the perpetrators imprisoned, Minnie and her colleagues were brought in to take over and start again.

Minnie immediately began teaching 'self-care', instinctively hugging every woman she dealt with. When she saw the effect this was having, she encouraged the women to help care for each other. The change in just three months was

remarkable. In that time, Minnie worked without one day off – and yet she loves her work and the women she cares for, and never once complains. Minnie is a great example to us and we are deeply proud of the beautiful, compassionate, selfless woman she has grown to be.

The picture shows Minnie with **Sunita**, another qualified Sarva nurse, who is also doing wonderfully well in her work and has recently married.



Sunanda is Sarva's first Cardiac nurse. Her sister, **Sonali**, is Sarva's first physiotherapy student and now in the third year of her 4½-year training. Part of her work is to teach leprosy sufferers how to use their contracted limbs and damaged muscles, and where necessary how to manage crutches or artificial limbs.

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At present, we have nine more students studying at medical school, with a further two training in Hospital Administration.

Sunil and **Rahul** are another two young men we have worked with from our founding. Both are now studying Mass Communication, mixing freely with their peers and pursuing a very different life indeed from that imposed on them by others' ignorance.



Deepak and **Samsheer** are our first students to choose 3-year diplomas in Electrical Engineering and Computer Application respectively. We have every confidence that both young men will go far as they muster all their courage, defy prejudice, step beyond the fence behind which they have been kept from the age of five and begin to make their way in the world.



The reason Sarva's work remains so relevant is that last year India reported 127,326 new cases of leprosy. This means it still accounts for some 60% of the world's total (Brazil comes second with 13%, then Indonesia with 8%). As this figure is not reducing, India's Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has introduced a radical house-to-house screening programme in high-risk districts. The first campaign in just 7 of India's 29 states discovered 7,000 previously unrecorded (and thereby untreated) cases.

A second campaign has now been completed, with an incredible 320 million people across 19 states being screened by 300,000 health teams. The results have yet to be published, but it is expected to significantly raise the 'official' figures that India has previously submitted to the WHO.

But, of course, as the Goodwill Ambassador of Japan's Nippon Foundation recently stated, "Leprosy is not only a medical issue, but a social issue. Unless both are tackled at the same time, it will not be possible to achieve a truly leprosy-free world."

It is predominantly at this social level that Sarva continues to focus its energies and every single penny donated, with nothing lost to salaries, expenses or administration. So again we thank you for your support of our projects and of our unflinching determination to relieve suffering, isolation and despair. Together, we are transforming lives,

David & Bernard

Sarva may be small, but we are deeply grateful for any support you can offer that enables us to ensure at least a few hundred of the thousands of needy cases are secured an education that leads to good quality employment and freedom from what would otherwise be life-long stigma and exclusion.

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SARVASHUBHAMKARA is a small organisation that works with 'forgotten people'.

Our mission The relief of poverty, sickness and distress of those in need and to advance the education for children and young people in India and Nepal, including the award of scholarships and bursaries

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