

**A PROGRESS REPORT ON
THE WORK OF PROJECTS
SUPPORTED BY
THE AWARE FOUNDATION IN INDIA
AS AT 15 AUGUST 2015**

From Rajesh Bhat

SWAPATH TRUST

Special Rehabilitation Programme

The academic year of 2015/16, beginning in mid June, was marked by identifying and approving, after due scrutiny, the names of 770 primary and secondary school students who are children of sex workers and HIV positive parents. The AWARE Foundation, through Swapath Trust, has been supporting this category of children since 2002. This year, aid was distributed, shown below (to the end of June) along with notebooks printed especially for them:

No	Category	No of Children	Notebook		Aid amount (Rs)
			Small	Big	
1	Sex workers' children	556	3631	1604	311800
2	Children of HIV+ parents	214	1299	824	149600
	TOTAL	770	4930	2428	461400

A small function was organized on 30 June at the Preventive & Social Medicine Department of Surat's Civil Hospital, where many of these students participated. Students were congratulated and some parents spoke on behalf of the group acknowledging the aid, support and guidance offered by AWARE through Swapath Trust.

On 12 and 13 August, I (Rajesh Bhat) conducted a participatory training course on child rights for a team of 35 workers engaged in this project. The training covered topics ranging from the legal definition of a 'child'; legalities of child rights; understanding of the UNCRC; some relevant social theories such as the 'human ecology' system and practical tips on what to do and who to approach to help a child in need of care and protection. The training involved the participants taking part in various exercises to test their understanding.

School Retention Programme

Efforts were made to launch 2 more Education Support Centres but until now, only one has been launched in Surat. The bottleneck is availability of teachers. Currently, 100 children attend 3 Centres supported by AWARE.

Higher Education Support Programme

Under this programme, 36 students have been supported up to 15 August. The process of college admissions is going on and more students will be supported.

AWARE is now developing a new collaboration with Sarvodaya Ashram School at Valam village, in Mehsana district. This rural residential school was established to educate children of educationally backward DNT communities. For many complex reasons, however, the school has been losing its grip over its functioning. Swapath Trust will supplement the meagre Government aid to the Ashram School to strengthen the quality of education and to bring the infrastructure to a level which would attract the children of DNT communities. Currently, there are about 55 students at the Ashram school and we intend to take the number to the maximum allowed of 120.

SAMADAN SHELTER HOME

AWARE continues to support SAMADAN shelter home for children affected by HIV, near Bangalore. This home has 62 children, living in 2 separate buildings for boys and girls.

VISHWAGRAM

At Karunagram shelter home, near Mehsana, 16 children without familial support, live and study. Both these shelter homes are managed with support from AWARE and a lot of other local resources have been mobilised for infrastructure and other activities.

CHILD RIGHTS COLLECTIVE - GUJARAT

AWARE has also been supporting Child Rights Collective - Gujarat, for the past year. This support has gone a long way in reviving this very useful collective endeavor to strengthen its work of capacity building and advocacy on issues related to children. A team of researchers is working on a status report about children in Gujarat.

Rajesh Bhat