

# NEWS UPDATE

JANUARY 2024



"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else."

- Booker T. Washington



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# INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY OF M S INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Manu and Rika Shah founded MSI in 1975, in the basement of their home in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. MSI is now the largest importer and distributor in the world of Premium Surfaces including granite, marble, porcelain and ceramic tiles, slate, travertine, limestone and other natural stone products from 37 countries. Most notably, MSI provided the granite for the Vietnam Memorial in DC.

Manu and Rika Shah established Sarva Mangal Family Trust (Sarva Mangal means 'let all be happy' in Sanskrit) over 20 years ago with compassion as their driving force for philanthropy. Manu's vision for SMFT is to act as a catalyst, challenge status quo, nurture passionate change-makers and support leapfrogging ideas that are scalable and sustainable. Today, all members from the Shah family are involved in social impact initiatives that are undertaken by SMFT. Manu supports VOSAP – Voice of Specially Abled People, which has created over 10,000 change makers and rated over 18,000 buildings rated for accessibility. He also supports Lend a hand India, which provides digital vocational training to over 300,000 students in 20,000 schools.

In 2007, Mr. Manu Shah was named Ernst & Young's national "Entrepreneur of the Year" in the distribution, manufacturing, and security category.

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## ABOUT SARVA MANGAL FAMILY TRUST

Established in 1994 by the Founders of M S International, Inc. The mission of the Sarva Mangal Family Trust is to improve and strengthen the health, education and wellness of communities and help them prepare for global jobs of the 21st century. Sarva Mangal is a Sanskrit word which means "Goodness to All."

To advance this mission, the Sarva Mangal Family Trust has donated to and is continuing to work with various organizations and programs in health promotion and prevention, assisting victims of domestic violence, empowering seniors, entrepreneurship, technological literacy, community activism, and children's education.

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## MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS



### **MSI Core Team and Family Visited Nonprofit for the Specially-Abled Kids**

The MSI core team consistently upholds the principle of giving back to society, and this commitment was vividly demonstrated during their recent visit to India. Accompanied by the younger generation of their families, the team visited Mathrushree Manovikasa Kendra in Bangalore, a center dedicated to the support and development of specially-abled children. The visit was not just an opportunity to interact with the beneficiaries, but also a meaningful lesson in social responsibility for the younger members of the MSI family. They engaged with the children through games, distributed sweets, and spent quality time understanding their needs and experiences. This heartfelt interaction left a lasting impression on both the core team and their family, reinforcing the values of empathy, compassion, and the importance of community service. (Continued on Page 4).

## NGO VISIT – MATHRUSHREE MANOVIKASA KENDRA

**January 2024** – Recently, the MSI Core Team had visited Mathrushree Manovikasa Kendra, a dedicated non-profit organization focused on enhancing the lives of specially-abled children. Guided by the inspirational Mr. Basavaraju, a committed team of caregivers and educators provides steadfast support to children ranging in age from 3 months to 30 years. Central to their mission is the Kumara Park Centre, a residential school specially designed to nurture these young individuals.

Mathrushree Manovikasa Kendra’s mission is to empower disabled children by equipping them with crucial skills for smooth integration into society. Their comprehensive services include customized educational programs, motor skill development, physiotherapy for motor disabilities, literacy education, and essential psycho-social support for parents. They also offer yoga sessions and medical care from qualified healthcare professionals, ensuring a holistic approach to each child's development.

Distinct from mainstream educational models, Mathrushree Manovikasa Kendra focuses on building foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, self-reliance, social skills, and daily living activities, including personal care and hygiene. Their teaching methods are thoughtfully adapted to each child’s unique personality, abilities, and family background. This personalized approach ensures that each child receives the attention and support they need to thrive.

During the visit, the Core team had the opportunity to witness firsthand the incredible impact of Mathrushree Manovikasa Kendra’s work. The Kumara Park Centre currently serves as a home for over 40 girls and children needing medical care, while the Gowdanahalli Centre accommodates more than 50 adolescent boys. They were particularly impressed by the educational aids displayed throughout the facility, including alphabet charts and informative displays promoting good hygiene practices. These visual aids play a crucial role in reinforcing the lessons taught by the dedicated staff.



# NGO VISIT – MATHRUSHREE MANOVIKASA KENDRA



Core Team Interacting with the Specially Abled Kids



Core Team Interacting with the Specially Abled Kids



Core Team Interacting with the Specially Abled Kids



Sweets Distribution



Specially Abled Kids Residing at Mathrushree



Sweets Distribution

## NGO VISIT – BHANSALI TRUST

**January 2024** – The SMFT Team recently visited the Bhansali Trust's Mushar Integrated Development Village project in Gaya, Bihar, which is dedicated to uplifting the marginalized Mushar community. Recognized as Mahadalits in India, the Mushars face dire circumstances marked by extreme poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and exploitation through exorbitant loan interest rates.

With an estimated population of 5 million spread across 10,000 villages in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and parts of Jharkhand, urgent interventions are necessary to improve their living conditions and protect them from exploitation. The primary objectives of SMFT's collaboration with the project include enhancing education, generating sustainable income, and providing micro-credit support.

Since its inception, the Bhansali Trust, in partnership with SMFT, has extended its reach to 125 villages, establishing coaching centers that have benefitted 7,395 students, with an additional 695 students expected to enroll by March. These coaching centers play a crucial role in providing quality education and academic support to children who would otherwise have limited opportunities for learning.

In terms of income generation, the project has fostered 162 Self Help Groups (SHGs), comprising 2,279 women engaged in activities such as weaving clothes. The formation of these SHGs has not only provided a source of income but has also empowered women by promoting financial independence and self-sufficiency. Moreover, micro-credit assistance has enabled these groups to manage their finances more effectively, steering clear of exploitative borrowing practices.

Beyond education and economic empowerment, the project places a strong emphasis on healthcare and nutrition. A notable achievement includes the distribution of 640 kilograms of protein powder, benefiting 213 individuals, underscoring the commitment to improving health and nutrition standards within the community. Paramedical workers play a crucial role, with 97 workers diligently attending to 65 patients each month, ensuring essential healthcare services reach those in need. These efforts not only address immediate health concerns but also contribute to the long-term resilience and self-reliance of the Mushar community, laying a strong foundation for sustainable development and offering hope for a brighter future for one of India's most marginalized groups.



Coaching Centre for 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Standard Kids



Self Help Women's Group Members Meeting



Bagha Ashram Residential School



Medical Camp at Dumaritad Village

## NGO VISIT – EKAL - INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

**January 2024** – The SMFT Team recently visited Ekal's Integrated Village Development Project in Myorpur, Uttar Pradesh. This project, initiated in November 2023 in partnership with SMFT, aims to transform 30 villages within designated geographic areas into self-sustaining entities. This transformation is achieved through a comprehensive plan that enhances education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. By integrating these developmental pillars, the project seeks to build strong communities capable of sustaining growth and prosperity independently.

Since the project's inception, the SMFT-supported Myorpur Center has made significant progress. Currently, 37 students are enrolled in a tailoring course, 30 students are participating in a computer course, and 30 children are receiving quality education through Ekal Vidyalayas. Additionally, 19 Arogya Sevikas are actively providing healthcare services on the ground, and 119 farmers have received support through the project, enhancing their agricultural practices and productivity. These efforts collectively aim to uplift the community and create a sustainable development model.

In the education sector, Ekal has established Ekal Vidyalayas in remote areas of Myorpur to provide quality education to children. These schools have introduced digital learning initiatives to promote technological literacy among students, ensuring they are equipped with essential skills for the future. The emphasis on digital literacy prepares students for a technology-driven world, broadening their horizons and opportunities.

The healthcare sector has seen significant advancements, with Ekal organizing health camps and collaborating with local doctors and hospitals. These initiatives focus on preventive healthcare measures and hygiene awareness campaigns, ensuring a healthier population that can contribute more effectively to community development. Additionally, economic empowerment is a crucial aspect of the IVD project, particularly through vocational training programs for women. These programs enable women to enhance their skills, achieve economic independence, and contribute to the overall economic development of the community by fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance.



Computer Class



Tailoring Class



Organic Farming Training



Organic Compost

## NGO IN FOCUS FOR JANUARY'24 – PROJECT LIFE

Friends of Project Life in USA formed Life Global in 2018 at New Jersey with a vision to include all NRIs across the globe and establish partner charities globally in collaboration with Project Life India. Life Global has supported humanitarian causes in India through following social activities:

- Contributed **19** primary schools Under Primary School Infrastructure Development Program
- Supported Women Empowerment by sponsoring training of **500** women
- Supported medical centers, institutions and hospitals in rural Gujarat
- Conducted Health is Life awareness drive in North America during pandemic
- Supported Tree Plantation in **12** villages of Gujarat





### *Life Education Centre*

Life Global is supporting Primary School Infrastructure Development Program of Project Life, India.

Achievements with support of Life Global

- Out of **115** primary schools dedicated to government
- Every year more than **32,000** students are benefitted
- Scholarship are awarded to more than **30,000** students
- Benefitting more than **8,500** students every year through Talent Hunt Program
- More than **15,000** students benefitted through Science on Wheels Program
- Smart Classes being introduced in all primary schools built up by Project Life



### *Life Women Empowerment Centre*

Life Women Empowerment Centre Life Global strive to empower socially & economically challenged women of rural Gujarat

Accomplishments with support of Life Global.

- Trained **10,000** deprived women from **259** villages of Gujarat state
- More than **8,500** women got self-employed
- More than **40,000** family members got benefitted
- Aiming to reach **15,000** deprived women by 2025, touching the lives of 100 thousand in future.



### *Life Blood Centre*

With support of Life Global following milestones are achieved:

- More than **680,000** units of blood components served more than **400,000** lives
- Organized more than **5,525** blood donation camps
- Since last 5 years provided more than **11,100** units of blood as free of cost to Thalassemia major patients
- Since last 5 years provided more than **10,000** units of blood on discounted rate to needy patients
- First standalone Blood Centre in India to receive ISBT Award for Developing Country – 2020
- Hosted Educational Symposium on Patient Blood Management, one of its kind in Gujarat, attended by **300+** doctors & clinicians



### *Life Thalassemia Prevention Centre*

Life Global is actively involved in eradicating Thalassemia deadly disease from India and Globe.

Achievements with the aid of Life Global:

- More than **1.4 million** people reached through Thalassemia awareness drive
- More than **0.67 million** person screened and benefited
- More than **20,000** Thalassemia screening done free of cost
- Provided free of cost blood units to **300** Thalassemia major children
- **120** births of Thalassemia Major prevented
- Submitted Thalassemia Bill in Lok Sabha, and Legislative Assembly of Gujarat State for The Mandatory Blood Testing of Persons of Marriageable Age or Married Couple, Bill 2017 to make Thalassemia free Gujarat & India



## SUCCESS STORY – PROJECT LIFE



**Name:** Preety

**Location:** Rajkot

**Project:** Education – Scholarship and Support

Preety's journey to success is a tribute to resilience, determination, and the power of education to transform lives. Despite facing numerous challenges, she emerged victorious, securing admission to Shri K.K. Sheth Physiotherapy College, a prestigious institution in Rajkot.

The turning point in Preety's life came when her father, a milk vendor, was involved in a tragic road accident in 2007. He sustained severe injuries and was hospitalized at H. J. Doshi Hospital for two years. Despite the best efforts of medical professionals, he remained bedridden until his passing in February 2011. This left Preety's family devastated, with her sister becoming the sole breadwinner, earning a meager income of INR 5,000 per month.

With the burden of financial responsibilities weighing heavily on her family, Preety's dream of pursuing higher education seemed unattainable. However, fate intervened in the form of the Shri Shashikant Zaveri Memorial – Life Scholarship Program. Preety was awarded a scholarship of INR 15,000, providing a glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak situation.

Determined to seize this opportunity, Preety embarked on her journey to fulfill her aspirations. With unwavering dedication and perseverance, she embraced her studies wholeheartedly, excelling in her coursework despite the challenges she faced. The financial support provided by the scholarship alleviated the burden on her family, enabling her to focus on her education without worrying about tuition fees.

Preety's hard work and resilience bore fruit as she successfully completed her First Year of Bachelor of Physiotherapy. Her achievement not only symbolizes her personal triumph but also serves as an inspiration to countless others facing similar obstacles. Through sheer grit and determination, Preety has demonstrated that no obstacle is insurmountable with the right support and determination.

As she continues her journey, Preety remains grateful for the opportunities that have come her way and is determined to make the most of them. Her story is a shining example of the transformative power of education and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

## SUCCESS STORY – PROJECT LIFE

Nestled in the serene heart of Wankaner Block, Morbi district, lies the village of Ratavirda, a community brimming with untapped potential. Yet, despite its natural beauty, Ratavirda grappled with the shadows of poverty and neglect, hindering its growth and prosperity.

**Project:** Life Education Centre

**Location:** Ratavirda, Morbi

With a staggering literacy rate of merely 20%, well below the national average, and a dire lack of basic amenities like proper sanitation facilities, Ratavirda's school stood as a silent witness to the struggles of its children. Parents, especially hesitant to send their daughters to a school devoid of essential infrastructure, watched helplessly as their hopes for a brighter future for their children dwindled.

However, amidst the bleakness, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of a generous donor, who took it upon themselves to breathe new life into Ratavirda's educational landscape. Through their benevolence, the once dilapidated school underwent a remarkable transformation, blossoming into a vibrant hub of learning and opportunity.

The newly created school building, boasting eight spacious classrooms, a multipurpose hall, and separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls, now stands proudly as a proof to the power of community-driven change. Equipped with modern amenities including safe drinking water facilities and a sprawling playground, the school not only provides a conducive environment for learning but also fosters holistic growth and development among its students.

Thanks to the unwavering support of SMFT funded nonprofit, Project Life, essential resources such as furniture and science kits were provided, enriching the educational experience of every child. Furthermore, initiatives like the Grant for Girl Education Upliftment have ignited a newfound enthusiasm for learning, particularly among young girls, leading to a significant reduction in dropout rates.

Embracing the spirit of inclusivity and innovation, the school's talent hunt programs and diverse extracurricular activities serve as platforms for students to explore and showcase their unique abilities. Today, with 313 students enrolled for the academic year 2014-15, including a balanced representation of both boys and girls, Ratavirda's school stands as an inspiration of hope for the entire community.

More than just a symbol of pride, it represents a promise of a better tomorrow for the children of Ratavirda, inspiring dreams and aspirations that reach far beyond the boundaries of their village. In Ratavirda, hope has found a home, and the journey towards progress continues with unwavering determination and optimism.

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