



THE LOOMBA TRUST
caring for widows around the world

The Loomba Trust

Activity Report 2008-09

2008 A Significant Year for The Loomba Trust

It has indeed been a momentous year and we are determined to build on the foundations we have laid both in India and internationally. During the year, the Trust has organised events in the UK, USA and India both to raise awareness and the much-needed funds.

The Trust aims to create awareness about the plight of widows and to provide help for them and their families. It also works to tackle the massive problems of empowering widows and educating their children through Corporate Social Responsibility. We continue working closely with all our Patrons, Trustees, Advisors, Partners and Supporters through out the world.

Our work during the year

In India, we are continuing to educate over 3000 children, same as last year, of poor widows and their mothers in all 29 states. All beneficiaries are selected irrespective of religion, gender and caste, who will receive scholarship for an initial period of 5 years.

As part of our global work, we continue to work with the Prince of Wales' international charity, Youth Business International, to start businesses and create opportunities for disadvantaged young widows and youth in Uganda, Bangladesh, Kenya and Sri Lanka. We also continue our partnership with Sir Richard Branson's charity, Virgin Unite, to support 1500 HIV orphans in South Africa.

We also continue our campaign for the UN recognition of International Widows Day, which highlights the plight of widows and their children around the world, who are suffering through poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, conflict and social injustice. Our campaign to get the UN recognition of International Widows Day is real and active.

The Loomba Trust 500 Club Launched in India

19th February, 2009: The Loomba Trust 500 Club - Sir Richard Stagg KCMG, British High Commissioner to India, hosted the inauguration of The Loomba Trust 500 Club at his residence in New Delhi. The Loomba Trust 500 Club is an initiative that will enable individuals to educate a poor widow's child by donating just Rs. 500 per month or a lump sum of Rs 6,000 for the year. The entire donation will go to the beneficiary and the administration cost will be borne by the Loomba Trust.

The aim of this new initiative is to increase the existing number of beneficiaries of 100 to 1,000 in the state of Delhi. Each beneficiary is selected irrespective of gender, religion or class. Unlike the previous initiatives, the Trust has expanded the donor pool to a larger population base who may be interested in contributing to the cause.

The launch was attended by over 200 prominent and generous people in Delhi. The Trust raised Rs. 450,000 at the event through donations and auction of gifts kindly donated by Porsche, Ultra Motors, Opera Wines and Mr. Vikram Sahney.

The Loomba Trust Seminar in New Delhi

20 November, 2008: The Loomba Trust held a Seminar at the British Council in New Delhi, which was chaired by the Trustee, Shri Lalit Mansingh. The theme of the seminar was “Corporate Social Responsibility: Educating Children of Poor Widows in India.”

The seminar was attended by over 120 delegates, which included the Guest of Honour, Cherie Blair, President of the Loomba Trust, Regional Director of British Council, Rod Pryde, Keynote Speaker, Mrs. Aruna Oswal ji and Former Governor of Sikkim and Uttarakhand, Shri Sudarshan Aggarwal.

In his presentation, the Founder Chairman Trustee, Raj Loomba said - “Education is important for all children regardless of their gender, religion, colour or creed. It is their Birth Right. Yet, in India, not hundreds, not thousands, but millions of children do not have the fortune to receive education in their life. Instead, majority of them will end up on the streets and get involved with petty crimes or end up working in the factories - where the child labour is a common place.”

He added - “According to the statistics, there are millions of children, who are out of school in India. And, it is a national problem. Through corporate social responsibility we should work out some sustainable development of the children’s education.”

Both Mrs. Aruna Oswal and Shri Sudarshan Aggarwal made overwhelming speeches and gave a donation of Rs. 500,000 and Rs. 200,000 respectively to the Loomba Trust. Another speaker, Shri Pooran Pandey, CEO of the Times Foundation, supported the cause of widowhood and pledged to work together with the Loomba Trust to help educate the children of poor widows in India.

Cherie Blair inaugurates a school in Punjab in India

18th November 2008: Inauguration of Shri Jagiri Lal Loomba Government Senior Secondary School Dhilwan, Punjab - Cherie Blair, President of the Loomba Trust, inaugurated the Shri Jagiri Lal Loomba Government Senior Secondary School in Dhilwan in Punjab. The inauguration was attended by the Founder Chairman Trustee, Raj Loomba and his wife, Veena Loomba. The Deputy Commissioner of Kapurthala District, Shri Balamurugan, graced the occasion with his presence amongst the many leaders of the village and 305 school students. It was an emotional 'back to roots' visit for Raj Loomba, who was born in Dhilwan, and had started his schooling at this school at the age 6 years.

In January 2008, The Loomba Trust donated Rs 50 lakhs (US\$125,000) for the reconstruction and renovation of the school, which was originally built by His Excellency The Maharaja of Kupurthala, in 1939, to celebrate the Diamond Anniversary of his Accession to the Throne. However, due to the neglect and poor maintenance, the building had deteriorated over the years and was not safe for the school. The Loomba Trust donation was matched by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Punjab, Shri Prakash Singh Badal, who also agreed to rename the school after Raj’s Father, Shri Jagiri Lal Loomba.

Under the supervision of the Executive Engineer, Shri Varendra Kumar, the school has been rebuilt to its original facade and glory. A new hall has been added to the main building. A comprehensive toilet block has also been built for boys and girls, which will provide high standard of sanitation and hygiene to the students.

Cherie Blair and other dignitaries distributed scholarship cheques to the beneficiaries of the Loomba Trust who were present at the event along with their widowed mothers. The event was concluded after a colourful Bhangra and folk dances performed by the students.

Diwali Celebrations in New York

5 November 2008: The Annual Diwali Gala Dinner 2008 in New York - The President of Rwanda, HE Paul Kagame and Raj Nooyi, a prominent philanthropist NRI in the United States, were honoured for their important humanitarian work by The Loomba Foundation at its Annual Diwali Gala Dinner. The Loomba Foundation is the world's first global charity dedicated to supporting and raising awareness of the plight of widows around the world. The Gala was held on 5th November, 2008 at the Ballroom of the Jumeirah Essex House Hotel in New York. Proceeds from the Gala will educate children of poor widows in India.

Following a landslide victory in 2003, President Paul Kagame became Rwanda's first President after the Genocide in 1994. Since then, he has been actively involved in helping victims of the Genocide, many of whom who became widows as a result of the conflict. He seeks to empower women generally and 30 per cent of his Government is made up of women. The award was presented by the Foundation's President, Cherie Blair, to the Rwandan Permanent UN Representative, HE Joseph Nsengimana who accepted it on behalf of the President. Raj Nooyi, a prominent philanthropist NRI in the US, was presented with a 2008 Humanitarian Award, also by Cherie Blair, in recognition of his philanthropic work supporting needy children through Plan International in India.

The Diwali dinner was attended by Cherie Blair, President of the Loomba Trust & Foundation; Founder Chairman Trustee, Raj Loomba; and Trustees Lord Dholakia, Mrs. Veena Loomba, Jack Klinck, Dr. Peter Rajsingh, Harjiv Singh and Dr. N. P. Loomba. The Sheriff of Mumbai, Dr. (Mrs.) Indu Shahani; UN Assistant Secretary General, Rachel Mayanja, and the Rwandan Permanent UN Representative, HE Joseph Nsengimana, Mrs. Grazyna Sen, wife of the Indian Permanent UN Representative, Mrs. Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsi and wife of honoree Raj Nooyi, Baroness McDonagh, Ms. June Sarpong from Channel 4, along with other many dignitaries graced the Diwali celebrations with their presence.

Celebrations of Diwali and the UN International Day of Non Violence in London

2 October 2008: Annual Diwali Gala Dinner in London - Cherie Blair, wife of the former British Prime Minister, Rt Hon Tony Blair, and President of the Loomba Trust welcomed hundreds of celebrities, who turned out in style at the Whitehall Banqueting House in London, for the Loomba Trust Annual Diwali Dinner that also marked the UN International Day of Non Violence, commemorating the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, an Apostle of non-violence.

Famous Bollywood star, Kajol Devgan, added a touch of glamour as she accepted to become a Goodwill Ambassador. Kajol said she was honoured and hoped she would be worthy of this appointment when she accepted a plaque from Cherie Blair. The event raised £150,000 for charity to provide scholarships for the children of poor widows in India, which was supported by Virgin Atlantic, KPMG, Telety Group, Barclays, Trikona Trinity Capital, Clariden Leu, Clegg Gifford and Co, Beechson, Cobra Beers Ltd, Precis, London City Airport, University of East London, Metropolitan Police, Wates, Schneider Electric, Singhanian and Co and Rinku Group.

The Chief Guest, Mayor of London, arrived in eco-friendly transportation, a bicycle, and made a brilliant speech about Britain's multi-culturalism and the significance of non-violence in today's world. Mayor Johnson said he was proud to continue supporting the Loomba Trust that had been given by his predecessor, Ken Livingstone, who also attended the dinner as a Patron of the Loomba Trust.

India's High Commissioner to Britain, HE Shiv Shanker Mukherjee, congratulated the Loomba Trust for 'a worthy job' and promised his support for its noble efforts for the poor widows in India and around the world. He greeted the British people on Diwali that had become an international festival marking the victory of good over evil. Highlighting the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi, he said Gandhi first promoted non-violence and it was very relevant to the world today.

Lord Karan Billimoria, Chairman of the UK India Business Council and Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Loomba Trust; and Lord Navnit Dholakia, a Trustee; were among the other speakers while among the distinguished guests were Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrats; Lord Khalid Hameed, Lord Bagri, Lord Mackenzie, Patron of the Loomba Trust; Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chairman of Three Faiths Forum; Don McKinnon, former Commonwealth Secretary General, Baroness Jo Valentine, Mr. Mohandas, Secretary of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India and many other dignitaries.

Cherie Blair said that the Loomba Trust helped to educate at least a hundred children of poor widows in every state of India totalling 3,600 and also extended its projects to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Syria and Columbia. The Trust is planning to expand its work in Rwanda, Tanzania and Botswana during 2009.

Recalling her visit to India early this year to support the work of the Trust, she said that she had a chance to visit rural India and spend time with many Loomba Trust supported widows and children. She was touched by their ability to face challenges as she appealed everyone to help the Trust at a conference in Delhi.

The Founder and Chairman Trustee, Raj Loomba, said that women often lose their husbands due to violence in many countries and it is therefore fitting that on this day we commemorate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, an apostle of non-violence, who added "We should light a candle tonight to celebrate the festival of lights and give those unfortunate women a ray of hope."

NRI Institute of India hosts a dinner in New Delhi

19 August 2008: NRI Institute of India held a dinner at the Habitat centre in Delhi to celebrate the recent successes of the Loomba Trust and, in particular, Raj Loomba's CBE Award, which was announced in HM Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2008.

Amongst over 100 prominent guests, the dinner was attended by Sir Richard Stagg, British High Commissioner, as Chief Guest, and Mr. Mohan Das, Secretary of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, as Guest of Honour.

President of Rwanda supports International Widows Day

31 July 2008: Rwanda supports the Trust's campaign for the UN Recognition - The President of Rwanda writes to the UN Secretary General to recognise International Widows Day, on behalf of the Loomba Trust. We are hoping that it will be discussed at the next General Assembly in September 2008.

United Nations Accredits the Loomba Trust

30 June 2008: The Loomba Trust Accredited as an UN NGO - The Loomba Trust was approved for association with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the United Nations on 30th June 2008. Through the United Nations accreditation, the Loomba Trust is committed to raising public awareness about the purpose and activities of the United Nations and issues of global concerns, especially on the plight of widows and their children who are suffering through poverty, illiteracy, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Malaria, conflict and violence and social injustice.

Global Research Polling on Widows

23 June 2008: World Opinion Organisation and Chatham House Polls - The Polling Results of a

global research programme on widows across 17 nations was released to coincide with the 4th International Widows Day. The research was commissioned by the Loomba Trust in conjunction with **Chatham House, London** and **WorldPublicOpinion.org** to identify the perception of widows.

4th Anniversary of International Widows Day Celebrations Around the World

23 June 2008: Marks 4th International Widows Day - The Loomba Trust organised events in 7 countries around the world to mark the 4th International Widows day on 23rd June, 2008.

UK: London: Concert at Trafalgar Square - Trafalgar Square, London played host to one of the capital's most colourful free concerts on Monday 23rd June 2008, to mark the occasion of International Widows Day and help raise awareness of a cause that is gaining global momentum. Over 300 celebrities, VIP's and high profile dignitaries from the UK and abroad joined in unison with members of the public, to remember the plight that widows face across the world.

Staged by the Loomba Trust, a UK-based charity which fights to improve the position of widows in the developing world, the concert featured an international line up of entertainment, including critically acclaimed Icelandic opera singer Cortes; Bhangra music legends, Malkit Singh and Channi Singh; Bollywood dancing sensation, Honey Kalaria; female Bhangra vocalist, Mona Singh; and an array of vibrant dancers from the Indian Subcontinent and the UK.

Hosted by GMTV presenter, Clare Nasir, the concert was opened by The Loomba Trust's Founder and Chairman, Raj Loomba, and President, Cherie Blair, with a ceremonial release of white doves from the stage, accompanied by other key public figures and patrons of The Loomba Trust, including respected broadcaster and journalist, Sir Mark Tully.

UK: Leicester - Lord Mayor releases balloons at the De Montfort University: The first Asian woman Lord Mayor in the UK, Cllr. Manjula Sood, a widow herself, highlighted the plight of the widows around the world and marks the 4th International Widows Day by releasing multi-coloured balloons in the city of Leicester on Monday 23rd June 2008. The event was staged by the Loomba Trust in association with De Montfort University, The Punjab Link Council and The Sikh Welfare and Cultural Society UK.

USA: United Nations in New York - International Widows Day was marked in the United States with a gathering of influential, international women, who came together for a lunch conference at the United Nations in New York. Guests included Elbrun Kimmelman, a member of the Trust's Advisory Council, and Grazyna Sen, wife of the Permanent Indian Ambassador to the UN.

India: New Delhi – British High Commissioner Marks International Widows Day at his residence - On Monday 23rd June 2008, Sir Richard Stagg KCMG, British High Commissioner, hosted a lunch at his residence to support the Loomba Trust and Mark the 4th International Widows Day in India. The event was attended by a number of the Trust's beneficiaries. They were all presented with gifts by a supporter of the Trust, Mr. Mukal Anand.

Sir Richard Stagg said, "Widows in India are particularly vulnerable community and face difficult challenges. In this challenging environment, the Loomba Trust has devised a wonderful system of helping widows so that they and their children can have a full and worthwhile life."

The High Commissioner presented certificates to 10 widows who had successfully completed the Beauty and Hair Care training from Blossom Kochhar Training Institute, under the Loomba Trust Entrepreneur Programme. The three-month training was offered free of cost to these widows and will enable these widows to become self-reliant. Later, he released hundreds of balloons as a symbol of freedom in the company of Mr. Lalit Mansingh and Mr. K.M. Singh, Trustees of the Loomba Trust. Mr Mansingh read a special message from the President of the Trust, Cherie Blair.

India: Dhilwan (Punjab) – Deputy Commissioner of Kapurthala District releases balloons at the

Shri Jagiri Lal Memorial Senior Secondary Government School in Dhilwan to mark the 4th International Widows Day. The event, organised by the Loomba Trust, was attended by over 100 students at the school as well as many Government officials and the village leaders.

Sri Lanka: Colombo – On Monday 23rd June 2008, an International Widows Day Commemoration was held to mark the 4th International widows day. The ceremony was sponsored by the Loomba Trust (UK) and organized by the HYBT and the WDF.

The event was attended by 450 widows in Hambantota District. A number of invitees including the officials of the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC), Women Development Foundation (WDF) and several other public and other representatives of local organizations. This gala event was characterized by the release of about a 1000 balloons and a unique tree-planting moment.

Arrangements were made to present special awards on this occasion to five most outstanding women entrepreneurs from matriarchal families that have made immense contributions towards the economic and social development of the country by being engaged in the business sector.

Nepal: Kathmandu – The Loomba Trust Entrepreneur Programme, in partnership with the YBI Network, has also reached Nepal. On the 23rd June, NYBF, the local youth business programme, hosted a gathering of businesspersons (and potential supporters) in conjunction with the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce.

Syria: Damascus – In Syria, International Widows Day was celebrated in conjunction with BIDAYA, the local partner of the Youth Business International Network, which is helping widows start their own businesses. As part of the ceremony, candles were lit and a tree was planted in the Botanical Garden close to the Damascus Castle.

This painting, entitled “The Widow,” was donated by a famous Syrian artist and is to be auctioned off by BIDAYA to raise fund for their programme.

Kenya: Nairobi – In partnership with the Youth Business International Network, The Loomba Trust has begun a programme to empower widows in Kenya. International Widows Day was launched in Nairobi with a launch of multi-coloured balloons. Over 100 widows and their children, each of whom had an individual story of success, attended the event. Each widow left the event with a package of food, given in the memory of Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba.

The Loomba Project has been in contact with over 5,000 widows and orphans in nine communities in Nairobi. Already 17 widows and children of widows have been issued with loans and volunteer business mentors, with many more women awaiting training.

14 June 2008: Trust’s Founder, Raj Loomba, receives CBE – “Commander of Excellence of British Empire” Award from Her Majesty The Queen in the UK - “For charitable services to poor widows and their children overseas particularly India, and to UK/India interests more widely”

14 April 2008: First Ever Indian Festival hosted by US Ambassador in London - The iconic event, the first ever of a Punjabi festival to be celebrated in the premises of the US Embassy in London, was organised in close collaboration with the Loomba Trust. The ceremony was conducted in the auditorium of the Embassy.

A golden milestone was reached in the great history of the Sikh community and their rich heritage, when the US Ambassador Robert H. Tuttle hosted the Vaisakhi festivities at the heavily secured American Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London.

The day’s events started with a lunch given by the Ambassador for 12 select invitees including Mr Loomba and Mrs Monika Mohta, Minister of Culture of High Commission of India. It was followed with the formal launch of the festivities by Ambassador Tuttle and Punjabi Bhangra performed by a group from Leicester.

Launch of Entrepreneur Programme in India

1 April 2008: The Loomba Trust Entrepreneur Programme was launched by the British High Commissioner at the International India centre in New Delhi. The programme aims to set up businesses for 100 poor widows in India, whose children are already being educated by the Loomba Trust.

Dr Blossom Kochhar Group has agreed to give training, free of cost, for Hair and Beauty care to these unfortunate widows. After the training, the Loomba Trust will either find a job or open a salon for each of the participant in this programme. As part of the pilot project for 10 poor widows from Delhi state, the participants received the training kits at the launch.