



**THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION**  
Caring for widows around the world

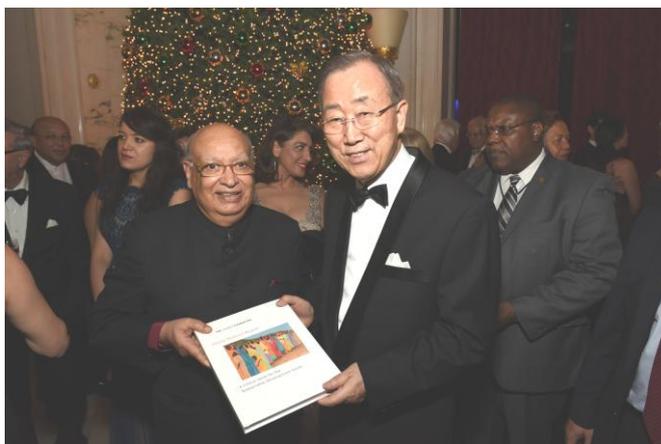
## ACTIVITY REPORT

1<sup>ST</sup> April 2015 to 31 March 2016

The year 2015-16 has been another momentous year for the Loomba Foundation. In addition to our core work of educating the children of poor widows and empowering the impoverished widows in Punjab and Varanasi, we have been busy in promoting the fundamental freedoms and human rights of widows, linking these with the Sustainable Development goal Goals established by the United Nations at its General Assembly in New York on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

### **17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 - World Widows Report Launched in New York:**

Our major achievement has been the publication of World Widows Report. This comprehensive research study was launched at a parallel event during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016. Earlier, the publication had been welcomed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, the Prime Minister of India Mr Narendra Modi and the director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London, Dr Robin Niblett.



World Widows Report shows that discrimination against widows is deeply ingrained in cultures across all continents, resulting in extreme poverty, gender-based violence, child labour, discrimination against girls, increased infant mortality and numerous other severe consequences, which directly affect over 259 million widows and 584 million their children around the world.

It has also revealed that discrimination against widows is a deep-rooted feature of gender discrimination all over the world, though its form and impacts differ from place to place and from culture to culture – from shocking stories of child widows below the age of 10 in parts of India, and widows in some African countries forced to undergo degrading “cleansing” rituals.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2016 - PM Modi Supports the Loomba Foundation:**



On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2016, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, launched our latest project to empower 5,000 impoverished widows in the holy city of Varanasi in India. This socio-economic project will not only help 5,000 widows but it will also support 50,000 of their children and family members.

Each widow will receive a vocational training in tailoring for two months. Once the training is completed, the Loomba Foundation will give each beneficiary a foot-operated Singer sewing machine so that they can start their own business or work in a factory to earn money, and become self-reliant. They will be able to educate their children and support their family members.

The Holy City of Varanasi is the constituency of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and is the most visited pilgrimage destination in India where many widows come to spend the rest of their lives after being ostracised by their families and society. The 2011 Population Census of India estimates that Varanasi has more than 90,000 widows.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister welcomed guests and 500 widows saying "I met Lord Loomba about a year ago in Delhi and he mentioned that the Loomba Foundation would like to support 5,000 widows in Varanasi. I met him again at the House of Lords during my visit to London in November last year. He told me that the Varanasi project had started and it was progressing as planned. Both Lord Loomba and his wife are dedicated to help the widows in India. I am pleased to launch their project here today.

I commend their work and feel happy that both of them are present at this event here today".

### **13th November, 2015 – India International Trade Fair**

In hopes to raise support for their mission of empowering widows and educating their children, The Loomba Foundation, put up their booth in the NBCC Pavilion at the India International Trade Fair (IITF), which started in New Delhi on November 14 and gone till November 27, 2015.

The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of the Trade Fair was inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee and the NBCC Pavilion inaugurated by Minister of State for Urban Development, and for Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Babul Supriyo along with NBCC Chairman and Managing Director, Dr Anoop Kumar Mittal.

The Hon'ble Minister of State for Urban Development and Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Shri Babul Supriyo visited our stall. The remarks of the Hon'ble Minister in our visitors book is reproduced below:

**"This is great noble thinking. Keep it up. God Bless"**

Dr Anoop Kumar Mittal, CMD NBCC, separately came to our stall to inaugurate it. The CMD was accompanied by the Director, Finance and Director Activities and host of other senior officers of NBCC including Mr Wanchoo, Chief General Manager (HRM), NBCC. Overall it was a good show, which has given us a lot of exposure and visibility. The remarks of Chief General Manager (HRM) are quoted as under:

**"Stall inaugurated by Dr A K Mittal, CMD, NBCC. Loomba Foundation is doing an excellent partnership with NBCC. All the best for the future."**

## **25 September 2015 - UN General Assembly and Sustainable Development Goals:**

In his capacity, as Chairman of a Global NGO with ECOSOC status, the United Nations invited Lord Loomba CBE to attend the opening session of the General Assembly on 25<sup>TH</sup> September, 2015, which was inaugurated by His Holiness Pope Francis.

Lord Loomba was also pleased to have received a second invitation to attend the Special High-Level Sustainable Development Goals session – “*A New Rural Development Paradigm and the Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities*”, which was hosted by the President of Korea and attended by the UN Secretary General, HE Ban Ki-moon and four Presidents of other countries, on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

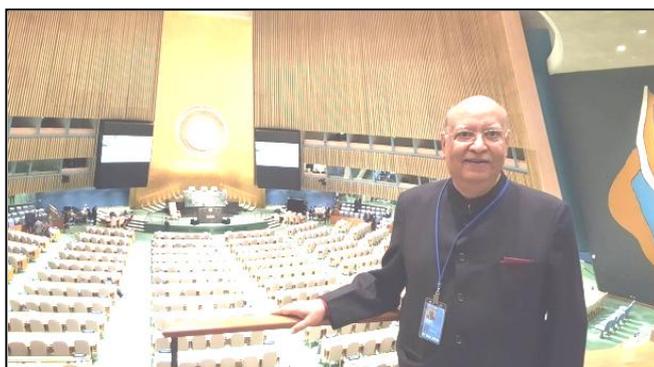
The Pope Francis said “Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offence against human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offences, for three serious reasons; they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment. They are part of today’s widespread and quietly growing - Culture of Waste”.

The United Nations has adopted Sustainable Development Goals, which has 17 Goals with 169 targets. The purpose of these goals is to end extreme poverty, fight gender inequality & injustice, fix climate change and leave no-one behind. Lord Loomba welcomed the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations as implementation of which will not only eliminate prejudices and discrimination against widows but it will also empower them economically, socially and politically.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015 - International Widows Day:**

London: [The Loomba Foundation](#) hosted a fundraising dinner at One Great George Street near Parliament Square in Westminster in London on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Widows Day, which was launched by the Loomba Foundation in 2005 and adopted by the United Nations in 2010. The dinner was attended by over 250 high profile guests, including senior politicians, and business leaders.

The event featured passionate speeches from both Lord Loomba and Cherie Blair, President of The Loomba Foundation, highlighting the plight of widows and their children affected by widowhood worldwide.



Having campaigned for more than a decade for the rights of widows worldwide, Lord Loomba sees this year’s Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity for widows’ rights to be finally put on the international development agenda. He said “Whilst I am very proud of the steps the Loomba Foundation has taken to empower widows over the past decade, and the political support the cause has gained, I will not rest until the plight of widows worldwide is addressed on the global scale that only Sustainable Development Goal recognition will deliver.”

Foundation President Cherie Blair said: “This is clearly not just a personal tragedy but a societal tragedy and a global tragedy. It’s absolutely crucial that we acknowledge the particular problem of widowhood and support efforts to tackle it. It is critical that this issue is taken seriously at the international level.”

In India, Mr. Pratap Singh, Country Head of The Loomba Foundation and Mrs. Monica Dhawan, Director of the India Vision Foundation distributed the ‘certificates of proficiency’ to the widows and destitute inmates of Faridabad jail who had successfully completed vocational training in garment making. The project was launched last year by Dr. Kiran Bedi and Lord Loomba for the benefit of 120 widows including 40 inmates in the female wards of the Gurgaon and Faridabad jails. The

International Widows Day was also observed in Ludhiana district, where the first phase of empowerment project is being conducted. In partnership with the Punjab Government, The Loomba Foundation is providing free sewing machine and garment stitching training to 5000 widows in the state.

It has become a global movement as a number of organisations in many developing countries in South Asia and across Africa observe International Widows Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> June every year since it was launched in 2005. The UN General Secretary has issued a message to all UN member states on every International Widows Day since 2011.

#### **Education Programmes:**

We have continued educating children of poor widows in India. During the year, we have educated 1631 Children in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, J&K, Karnataka, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

In addition, the Loomba Foundation has supported the education of 18 students who are studying a four year engineering degree course at the Laxmi Narayana College of Technology in Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India.

We are pleased that over the past 17 years we have educated over 10,000 children of poor widows and supported over 60,000 their family members. Each beneficiary is selected irrespective of religion, gender and class. Once selected, they receive a monthly scholarship of Rs. 500.00, which is guaranteed for a period of five years initially.

#### **Raising funds and awareness:**

Like every other year, the Loomba Foundation has raised funds this year by organising a fundraising event in London and through major partnerships with the state Government of Punjab in India and Lions Clubs International Foundation in the USA.

In addition, the Loomba Foundation has remained busy during the year by engaging in advocacy. We have published World Widows Report and the Chairman has spoken at various events in London, Mumbai, Delhi and New York. We welcome the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations, which if implemented by National Governments, they will help reduce poverty, provide education and empower the disadvantaged widows economically, socially and politically – giving them hope and dignity in their lives.

#### **28th May, 2015:**

#### **Lord Loomba CBE urges the UK Government to lead the inclusion of issues relating to 258 million widows in the UN Sustainable Developments Goals 2015-2030**

Lord Loomba CBE participated in Her Majesty The Queen's Gracious Speech on International Development at the House of Lords. Lord Loomba informed the Lordships House that the United Nations is setting up Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 to build on the successes on Post 2015 MDG's.

Lord Loomba said "it is fantastic that SDG are seeking to promoting education and promoting gender inequality for women and girls". He added that that education and socio-economic empowerment is fundamental tools to achieve the UN targets.

Lord Loomba also praised what DFID is doing to help widows and their children around the world through direct aid to the developing countries and the United Nations.

Lord Loomba urged the Minister the Noble Baroness Anelay of St. Johns to take lead at the United Nations to ensure that the issues relating to widows and their children are included in the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2013.

**17th September, 2015:**

**Lord Loomba says that the UN should include widows and their children in the indicators which follow the adoption of the sustainable development goals.**

Lord Loomba CBE participated in the House of Lords' debate regarding the forthcoming summit to adopt the sustainable development goals, which takes place at the UN General Assembly from 25th September to 27th September, 2015. There are 17 goals with 169 targets covering five areas to act as a springboard from the MDGs.

Lord Loomba highlighted that if these goals are to be achieved, the UN must pay attention to a group of over one billion people comprising of 259 million widows, 584 their children and many more the family depends, who suffer in silence. Widows are invisible, forgotten sufferers in the developing countries. They are burden on society whereas if they are given education and empowered they will become contributors to their families, communities and nations.

Lord Loomba is pleased that the main purpose of these goals is 'do not leave anyone behind'. This can only happen if all nations will take responsibility of reducing the gap between poor and rich; gap between rural areas and urban; gap between educated and uneducated; gap between skilled and unskilled; and improve gender inequality and increase women and girls security.

Lord Loomba is delighted that he has been invited to attend a High Level Plenary Session at the United Nations General Assembly, which will be chaired by His Excellency Ban Ki Moon, UN General Secretary.

**5th February, 2016:**

**IOD India invited Lord Loomba CBE as Guest of Honour**

After successfully organizing the Indo-Global Business Meet at the House of Lords and the Annual IOD Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability at London in October, 2015, the Institute of Directors organized its 10th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility on 05-06 February, 2016 at Hotel Taj Lands End, Bandra (West), Mumbai, India.

Lord Raj Loomba, Founder of the Loomba Foundation, graced the occasion as Guest of Honor and recalled how his own personal struggles had motivated him to work for the cause of widows, globally. His moving speech had the audience in rapt attention and elicited a huge round of applause and acclamation for the phenomenal contributions made by his foundation. Lord Loomba spoke of the importance of corporate giving and how the culture of giving can help support the development landscape of the nation.

The CSR mandate promulgated through the Companies Act, 2013 asks over 16000 companies to spend 2% of their net profit on specified CSR activities. The Act has asked these companies to have CSR policies, CSR committees and work on board's direction. CSR has moved from backroom to boardroom. CSR has become the new game changer, needing an actionable business agenda. That was the context of the widely attended International Conference, where India is the first country in the world to mandate CSR.

The conference saw participation from over 9 countries including New Zealand, Bangladesh, Switzerland, Indonesia, USA, UK, UAE, Thailand and Canada. The conference was inaugurated by the Indian Philanthropist Padma Bhushan Mrs. Rajashree Birla, Chairperson, Aditya Birla Group. Dr. R Seetharaman, Group CEO, Doha Bank delivered the keynote address while Mr. S. Chakraborty, Chief Executive, Innovative Financial Advisors delivered a special address.

**6th February, 2016:**

**Lord Loomba CBE Receives One Globe Award 2016 for Social Impact**

Minister of State for Urban Development, Shri Babul Supriyo gave away the One Globe Awards at the fifth edition of the two-day One Globe: Uniting Knowledge Communities Conference held in New Delhi. The awards recognize and honor individuals as well as domestic and international companies for their contributions in building a 21st century knowledge economy through their initiatives in

digital economy, R&D, smart cities, entrepreneurship and social impact. The conference was inaugurated by India's Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Shri Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Lord Raj Loomba CBE received the Award for Excellence in Creating Social Impact for helping provide global recognition to the cause of over 258 million widows and their 585 million children worldwide. Prime Minister Modi recently supported The Loomba Foundation's project to provide dignified livelihood to 5000 widows of Varanasi through skills training in tailoring and sewing machines.

The One Globe conference is India's leading conference that brings together global thought leaders to discuss how we build a 21st century knowledge economy in India and South Asia. It explores the intersection of technology, innovation, smart cities, skills, regional collaboration and education. This 5th annual edition of the One Globe Conference: Uniting Knowledge Communities conference will specifically focus on ideas, issues and impact of the Indian government's ambitious agenda to transform India into a 21st century knowledge economy through its initiatives like "Digital India", "Make in India", "Smart Cities" and "Entrepreneurship".

**Lord Loomba has written many columns in the Asian Voice, which is a renowned weekly newspaper in London, highlighting the plight of widows and advocating how to help them.**

### **Future Plans:**

A mega Concert has been planned to take place at the Siri Fort in Delhi in India on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, which is expected to be attended by over 1500 people. The concert will celebrate Diwali 2016 and raise funds for our projects in India.

It will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Loomba Foundation next year as it was established in 1997. We will be organizing a memorable event to mark International Widows Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2017.

We will also complete our existing project of empowering 5000 widows in Punjab and 5000 in Varanasi during the year.

In addition, we are planning to empower 2600 widows in Vrindavan, a city known as 'City of Widows' in 2016-17. This project is in association with Lions Club International Foundation, who have given us grant based on 1:2:4 partnership. It means that the Loomba Foundation will pay 25%, another 25% will be added by Lions Club in the UK making it 50%, which will be matched by Lions Club International Foundation. The total amount comes to approximately £120,000.00, which will enable us to empower 2600 widows, who will receive vocational training in tailoring for two months. On completion of their training, they will be given each a foot-operated sewing machine so that they can become self-reliant, educate their children, support their family members and live a life of dignity.

We will hold events to promote other organisations such as the Consortium of Street Children, Asian University of Women and Barnardo's, the largest charity for children in the UK.

Finally, we will continue educating children of poor widows in India, each of whom receives a scholarship of Rs.500 per month. We will also continue raising awareness of the plight of widows in India and around the world through advocacy and debates in the House of Lords in London.