

The Loomba Foundation **Activity Report 2019-20**

2019-20 has been another year full of achievements for the Loomba Foundation and we continued educating children of poor widows, empowering impoverished widows. We have also organised several events in India and the UK, to raise awareness of the plight of widows and their children.

Education Programme:



The Loomba Foundation continued educating 20 children of poor widows belonging to the Mushahar community. We donated Rs. 10 lakhs to Shoshit Samadhan Kendra in Patna to support the education of these students as per our MOU. To date, we have educated over 10,000 children of poor widows in all 30 states in India, who received a scholarship of Rs.500 per month, guaranteed for a minimum period of five years.

Empowerment Projects:



The Loomba Foundation is currently running a project to provide skills training to over 4000 widows, divorcees or single parent mothers in five states in India, including Delhi, Mumbai, West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. This project is being run in partnership with the Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM), who have already trained 1447 beneficiaries. To date, the Loomba Foundation has empowered over 12,000 impoverished widows in 16 States in India, who received training in tailoring for two months and a foot-operated sewing machine on completion of the training, free of cost. As part of our global programme, the Loomba Foundation has empowered several thousands of widows in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Syria, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Malawi, Rwanda, Chile and Guatemala.

Fundraising and advocacy events:

13th April 2019: Amritsar Massacre Centenary Remembrance Dinner:



The Loomba Foundation organised a Remembrance Dinner in the Cholmondeley Room at the House of Lords in London on Saturday, 13th April 2019. The dinner was held to raise awareness of the Amritsar massacre, which took place in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in Punjab in India on this day 100 years ago on 13th April 1919. The event was attended by many dignitaries both from India and the UK. Lord Loomba CBE and Lord Desai made an appeal to the British Government for an apology for this atrocity. Unfortunately, it is still pending.

23rd June 2019, International Widows Day Event in Varanasi, India:



The Loomba Foundation, a United Nations-accredited global charity, which is committed to educate children of poor widows and provide socio-economic empowerment to widows, hosted an event at the Kadambini Banquet and Lawn in Varanasi on Sunday, 23rd June, 2019, to mark the 9th UN recognized International Widows Day. Varanasi is known as a city of widows, where over 90,000 widows live, who are expelled from their homes by their own relatives because widows are considered inauspicious people. Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Women Welfare, Mother and Child Welfare of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, Mrs. Swati Singh, was the Chief Guest at the event. Over 250 guests including the Loomba Foundation beneficiary widows from Varanasi attended the event. The Chief Guest read a message issued by the UN General Secretary to mark International Widows Day 2019. The Loomba foundation, in partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation, distributed 70 foot-operated Singer sewing machines to widows and a saree as a token of gift. In addition, mementos and certificates were presented to the supporters of the Loomba Foundation. A cultural programme was organized by students of a renowned dance school of Varanasi.

23rd June 2019: Observing International Widows Day:

The Loomba Foundation marked International Widows Day 2019 at the House of Lords on Monday, 24th June 2019. The theme this year was 'Skills Training for Widows', supporting the Sustainable Development Goals. A dinner was organized by the Loomba Foundation at the Cholmondeley Room at House of Lords in London on Monday, 24th June, 2019, which was attended by many dignitaries including the Government Whip, Rt Hon Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE, Mr G P Hinduja and Lord Bilimoria CBE DL.

19th August 2019, Launch of “CYCLING FOR WIDOWS” in New Delhi:



The British High Commissioner to India, Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, hosted a lunch at his residence to launch the Loomba Foundation’s ambassador Chris Parsons’ initiative “CYCLING FOR WIDOWS”. Chris plans to cycle from Kanyakumari in the South to Srinagar in the North, covering 4,500 Kms in 45 days, and aims to raise funds for the Loomba Foundation to help widows in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in India. The launch was attended by Lord Raj Loomba CBE, Mr. Chris Parsons, Trustees Mr. Balbir Singh Kakar, Mr. Harjiv Singh, Patrons, Sir Mark Tully OBE, Padamshri Vikram Sawhney, Tech Mahindra CEO, Mr. C.P. Gurnani and many high-profile business leaders. Mr. Gurnani pledged to give training in IT to 200 hundred youths of Kashmiri widows at a cost of Rs. 500,000 (£60,000 approximately)

19th August 2019, Collaboration with Tech Mahindra:

As pledged by Mr. C.P. Gurnani at the launch of ‘Cycling for Widows’ project, the Tech Mahindra Foundation announced today its collaboration with The Loomba Foundation to provide training to 200 youths of widows in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Tech Mahindra Foundation is the Corporate Social Responsibility Arm of Tech Mahindra, a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting and business reengineering services and solutions, The collaboration will facilitate employment-oriented skill training for widows and their youths from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Tech Mahindra Foundation will support the training needs of the students selected by the Loomba Foundation at its state-of-the-art academies in digital technologies and healthcare.

29th August 2019, Empowerment of 500 widows in Lucknow:



The Loomba Foundation hosted an event to inaugurate its Empowerment Project for 500 widows in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh in the presence of Mrs. Anandiben Patel, Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh and Mrs. Swati Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Women's Welfare, Child Development and Nutrition, Govt of Uttar Pradesh. Other eminent dignitaries who attended the event included Mr. A.D. Pathak, Director, Bhartiya Ganna Anusandhan Kendra, Lucknow, Mr Rajat Kapoor (Managing Director, Indian Diaspora Club) to name but a few.

5th September 2019, Launch of 'Glorious Diaspora Pride of India' Book:



The Loomba Foundation in association with the Indian Diaspora Club organised an event at which the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Venkaiah Naidu, released a book "Glorious Diaspora Pride of India" in the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Conference Hall at his residence in

New Delhi. The book will bring all the Pravasi Bhartiya Samaan Patra Awardees, to date, on one platform through print and connect them with sense of oneness from different parts of the globe to support the Government of India. The event was attended by the Founder and Chairman of the Loomba Foundation and Dr. Dnyaneshwar Mulay, IAS, former Secretary, MEA and Member of National Human Rights Commission of India, as Guests of Honour. The other dignitaries who graced the event with their presence were Shri Dinesh Patnaik, IFS Addl. Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Shri B. Venkatesham, IAS, Principal Secretary (Tourism) to Government of Telangana, Dr. Narhari Singh Banger, IAS, Managing Director, HSIDC, Govt. of Haryana, Ms. Reeta Sarkar, YK Trustee of the Loomba Foundation and Mr. Harjiv Singh, Founder of Gutenberg and Trustee of the Loomba Foundation in India amongst many other high profile guests.

4th November 2019, Celebration of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th birthday:

The Loomba Foundation hosted an event at the House of Lords on 4th November 2019, to celebrate the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The event was held in association with Rt. Hon. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia. Lord Loomba CBE welcoming the guests spoke about the virtues of Guru Nanak whilst emphasising on creation of a gender equal society. Rt. Hon. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon delivered a keynote speech. The event was compered by Mrs. Shamin Lalji, Trustee of the Loomba Foundation. The celebrations were attended by Rt. Hon. Lord Paul PC, Shri Manmeet Singh Narang, Minister of Co-ordination of Indian High Commission, Lord Jitesh Gadhia, Mr. Tim Jones, Tata Ltd, Dr. Mohan Kaul, Chairman of Pontaq, Mr Loknath Mishra MD & CEO of ICICI Bank, amongst others dignitaries and members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

6th November 2019, Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi Ji's 150th Birth Anniversary:



To celebrate the Mahatma Gandhi Ji's 150th birthday anniversary, the Loomba Foundation launched a project in Ahmedabad to empower 150 widows. The project is supported by the 'People Possible Foundation' under its corporate social responsibility programme.



The Self -Employed Women's Association (SEWA) will run this project by providing a three months training in cutting and tailoring to the beneficiaries. An organisation 'Making a Difference (M.A.D) is expected to employ them to make cotton bags, so they can earn money and become self-reliant.

14th December 2019, Published a Magazine 'Bringing Prosperity in Kashmir':

The Loomba Foundation in association with Asian Voice, the most popular Indian weekly in London, published a magazine 'Bringing Prosperity in Kashmir'. It will be distributed to 30,000 households in the UK. The purpose of this magazine is to explain the history of Jammu and Kashmir when it was one of the Indian States as well as, at the same time, to highlight the development opportunities for bringing prosperity to the Union Territory, after the revocation of the 370 clause, through farming, business, tourism and social work. The Loomba Foundation is planning to empower 5000 beneficiaries in the areas of tourism, hospitality, tailoring, hair and beauty and food processing. You can obtain a soft copy of the magazine by clicking: https://issuu.com/abpl/docs/loomba_foundation_dec_2019?fr=sM2I4ODIwMTE.

3rd February 2020, Chris Parsons Launches 'Cycling for Widows' Project:



The Loomba Foundation's ambassador, Mr. Chris Parsons, starts his project of cycling across the length of India from Kanyakumari in the south to Srinagar in the North. He aims to complete a

journey of 4500 kms in 45 days and raise US\$ 450,000 for the Loomba Foundation to empower 5000 widows and their youths in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. On the eve of 3rd February, Professor Dr. C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor of O.P. Jindal Law University in Sonapat in Haryana and a close friend of Chris hosted a conference in Kanyakumari to celebrate Chris' Cycling for Widows project. It was attended by over 150 guests including Shri N. Suresh Rajan, MLA and many local dignitaries. Cycling for Widows project was supported by many organisations and Chris' friends, which included Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCS), Tech Mahindra Foundation, UPL, OYO Hotels & Homes, HealthifyMe, Mukul Madhav Foundation, Godrej, Gutenberg Communications and many more.



After cycling through many villages and cities on the way, Chris reached Varanasi on 28th February 2020. Here he interacted with some of the widows, who had already benefitted from the Loomba Foundation. A press conference and cultural programme was organized by the Loomba Foundation at the Jade Inn in Varanasi.



He also met the Loomba Foundation's beneficiaries at a conference held at the Park Plaza Hotel after reaching Ludhiana in Punjab on 13th March 2020. Chris cycled 100kms every day and he was on his target to reach Srinagar on the 45th day, as planned. However, due to the start of Covid 19 pandemic he was forced to cut short his journey after reaching Jammu on the 41st day and

completing 4100 kms. He was advised by the British High Commission to rush back to London as international flights were soon stopping to fly from India.

5th March 2020, Global Women 4 Well-being Voice for Change Award:

Lord Loomba graciously accepted the first ever Global Women 4 Well-being (GW4W) Voice for Change Award for his work advocating for better treatment of widows around the world. Lord Loomba, speaking at an event on the 5th March, held to mark International Women's Day 2020, thanked GW4W for their recognition of his work over 20 years that had resulted in improving the lives of many millions of widows throughout the world. GW4W, in presenting Lord Loomba with the award, was keen to commend his "commitment to helping to empower so many women, [with a] focus on gender equity and being a leader in creating positive social change." Praising Lord Loomba for his, "leadership and ... example for others to follow," GW4W, in presenting the award, also wanted to publicly mark his phenomenal achievement in "getting the UN to name June 23rd, the day [his] own mother became a widow herself at the age of 37," as International Widows Day. It was, they said, "a monumental achievement." Addressing an audience of distinguished guests at Willis Towers Watson, Lord Loomba noted, "The aim of the Sustainable Development Goals: to leave 'no one behind', could have been written as a strapline for the Loomba Foundation." "The Loomba Foundation," he explained, "is determined to 'leave no one behind' as it follows its aims and objectives in helping widows and their dependents worldwide." Underpinning this ethos was making sure through his work that, "widows are not ostracised or marginalised, and suffer double discrimination both as women and as widows.

Future plans for 2020-21

- We will continue with our educational programme and empowerment projects in India.
- We will Continue advocating to set up National Commission for Widows and Widows Help Centres in India.
- We plan to start a new project to empower 5,000 widows and their youths in the Union Territory of J&K.
- As usual, we will continue organising Fundraising and advocacy events.