



Dear Sir/ Ma'am

Sulabh Widows Programme

Sulabh International has been engaged in the work of empowerment and mainstreaming of widows in the areas of Vrindavan, Varanasi and Uttrakhand, in the country.

We took up the cause of the widows at the instance of the Honourable Supreme Court of India that was seized of the matter related to protection and amelioration of a range of issues faced by a large number of old and destitute women popularly known as Widows of Vrindavan, who live in the Vrindavan area of Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh.

Shunned by their own families, thousands of Hindu widows make their way to the holy city of Vrindavan in northern India to find solace. But most of them end up being impoverished and neglected to lead a life of utter deprivation and hardship.

Under Sulabh's widows programme widows were given a monthly stipend of Rs 2000 each. That brought to an end to spending their waking hours begging in the streets and at the holy precincts of temple town.

Besides, the programme ensured that each one had regular access to desired medical facilities – medically equipped ambulances, eye and dental camps, old-age assistance through a team of dedicated doctors and helping hands.

Thus Sulabh's new skills development programme for widows imparts education and vocational training to them even in their ripe age, towards their tremendous self-reliance, more so instilling in them a sense of self-worth through development of their self-confidence. Sulabh's vocational training programme has equipped many of them with a sense of purpose as they earn their livelihood. They are trained in a number of trades like tailoring – they have been provided with sewing machines and trained in tailoring – making incense sticks, garlands from flowers and beads; many have opted to pick up language skills that have helped them in their day-to-day life, be it understanding any written information of relevance or even operating their bank accounts.

For their cultural inclusion, Dr. Pathak has worked to bring 'mothers of Vrindavan' and that of Varanasi to the mainstream of the society.

Widows, now as they are out of the confines of their homesteads, celebrate all the major festivals of the country with never-before gaiety and abandon – the Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the then Honourable President Shri Pranab Mukherjee have been kind enough to make time to welcome the 'mothers' who have tied rakhis to them on the occasion.

Widows' participation in the festivities attracts world's attention when the national and international media descends on Mathura to cover the events organized by Sulabh for the mothers every year.

Sulabh widows programme is both an outcome and a continuing journey of breaking social barriers, right to live a life of dignity for those who lost their status of even being a respectable social being on losing their husband for no fault of theirs, and above all, a profound attitudinal change of the society towards them.

The success of Sulabh's widows programme can be summed up in the words of the beneficiaries themselves when they say their 'desire to die has changed to their yearning to live'.

The cause of 'mothers' is an unfinished agenda. There is a pressing need to continue and expand this vital assistance to this elderly community. We are in the look-out for the like-minded in our quest for restoring them dignity and providing them with basics of livelihood.

Can you join hands with us? Can we count on you?

Hope Foundation Bank Details:-

Name of Account : Sulabh International Centre for Action Sociology
Wing Hope Foundation

Name of Bank : Union Bank of India

Name of Branch : Palam Village, New Delhi-110045

Account No. : 045221010000003

IFS Code : UBIN0904520

From
Vinita Verma
Senior Vice President
9560358023