



Putting Children First

St. Joseph's Development Trust

Annual Report

Academic Year

From June-2022 to May-2023

Number of Children Supported by

Stichting Children Support to India- 530



Annual Report from SJDT to all the Sponsors of Stitching Children Support to India

Introduction:

We are delighted to meet you once again through this Annual Report. The aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic recovery period was almost over and we move smoothly and fast with the provision of better opportunities to our children each day in our orphanages. Our efforts in this past year focused on actualizing many beautiful things in the orphanage for the betterment of our children. We journey with our children lovingly and patiently by providing affection, shelter, food, clothing, and education so that our children can use them all as a solid platform to come up in life. We carry out appropriate activities for providing a better tomorrow for helpless and underprivileged children with the utmost love and care. As we spread the light of education among underprivileged children, we hope that it will make their careers and lives better. We also keep promoting the message of hope and encouragement to keep believing in all their efforts right now. Amidst disappointments and failures in this divided world, we cling to faith. It can give us the courage to face the uncertainties of the future with open hands. It can also help us to move forward toward a city of hope where all underprivileged children can dream to become self-reliant and become good citizens of the nation and of the world.

We are proud to associate with you, **Stitching Children Support to India, with its new directors Erwin Krol, Jeroen and Jan** in this difficult time. In this Annual Report, we shall provide you with all the activities held in our orphanages as well as all the developmental activities for the village outreach programmes conducted for the welfare of our village-sponsored children in the first part. We also attach you with a photo gallery of all our activities in the second part.

“Education should make informed, compassionate individuals who contribute positively to society” - Dr. I. Sebastian.

1. Overall Activities in our orphanages

Introduction:

All the orphanages run by St. Joseph's Development Trust continue to exist with a noble aim to provide care, educational support, and protection for orphans, semi-orphans, and street children. All of our orphanages consist of many cottages constructed very similar to homely type promoting a kind of family living. We have ample child caregivers, janitors, cooks, and one watchman available to sufficiently manage the orphanages. All the inmates are being provided with 3 times' nutritious food, one set of books, two sets of uniforms, and regular dresses. Our children are studying in various private schools in a nearby town. We have students starting from 1st standard to University studies residing in our orphanages. A group of doctors are conducting health check-ups & providing medicines twice a year. Every child has an opportunity for indoor and outdoor recreation and plays facilities along with training in crafts and extra-curricular activities. We have abled child caregivers who are willing to help children with their vast experience and expertise. The way they carry out their duties to enhance each child's personal development, preparing children to become responsible people, able to socialize, adapt, and integrate into society as responsible and competent persons are remarkable.

1.1 Daily Time table from Monday to Saturday:

Our children's weekdays would begin at 5:30 am in the morning. All children would wake up at that time in order to get ready for learning at school. With supervision and timely assistance from our child-care-givers, all the children would be ready for breakfast at 7 am. Immediately after breakfast, the first set of primary children would go to school by school bus and the second batch would follow thereafter. They would go in two batches as they are many in number. And the rest of the senior students will go by bus by two times as they are also many in number. In the afternoon, at 4 pm, the primary students would return home. They will come on two trips in the late afternoon too. Around 5: pm all the senior students would return home from school. All children would

have a tiffin while narrating their class stories of that day. The rest of the evening is being spent doing evening chores, evening study, sports, games, and supper. They would have one more allotted study time before going to bed. The timetable on Sunday would be different as our children would engage in doing their personal things, including laundry and receiving their parents in our orphanages on the fourth Sunday of the month.

1.2 Evening Study:

Our students spend many hours every day in school learning. Therefore, we have proposed evening study as the best time to study without missing important deadlines concerning finishing homework. We have developed an evening schedule for studies and our children stick with it. Our students find themselves most alert and motivated in the evening. In the evening hours when there is peace without interruptions and distractions, our children can focus their studies well with the supervision of our abled wardens. The main outcome of this evening study is primarily helping our children to complete the homework and prepare for the next day's classes.

1.3 Nutritious Food:

We give importance to our children's food. We have made a well-designed nutritious menu for the children in our orphanages. We believe that nutritious food would assist our students to study effectively within a stipulated time frame. Our healthy food includes rice, wheat, millet, fresh veggies of all kinds, Nuts, eggs, fish, and chicken. In addition to this, our healthy foods which, in turn, can help our children to improve their memory skills. We provide the above-mentioned food menu to improve their mood and sharpen their memory. We believe providing these foods into their diet is the best way to prepare our children for studying. We are convinced that our given menu would provide a healthy mind in a healthy body for each child.

1.4 Sports and Games:

Our students are just confined to academics during the day. As they spend a lot of time reading or studying during school hours, we believe that many other activities are vital in the holistic development of a student, such as sports or games, etc. Academic studies and athletic capabilities are associated with each other and they are like the two sides of the same coin. Our students spend an hour daily in sports and games that make them stay healthy and it can lead to overall growth and development. Our children are actively engaged in games such as Basketball, Kabaddi, and Kho-Kho. They also play sports such as running races, sack races, three-legged races, swings, and skipping. It helps them to improve their social interaction and have a more positive outlook on life over time. We hope that physical fitness as the outcome of having games and sports would lead to mental fitness.

1.5 Gardening:

Amidst learning for many hours at school and spending a few hours also completing the daily homework, children need some fresh air daily. In this context, gardening can be a rejuvenating hobby for our children. We motivate our children to undertake simple gardening activities on our campus. Positively speaking, gardening can reduce their stress levels, and improve their mood and self-esteem. Gardening allows our children to take a step back and enjoy some mindful activity away from distractions and enjoy peace and serenity. As a result of gardening, our children learn to care for the nature and product environment.

1.6 Extracurricular activities and hobbies:

These activities are done outside of regular school hours. These provide students with opportunities to gain life skills that will be crucial for their future success. These activities are a way to keep our children engaged and allow them to learn something new. Extracurricular activities are an essential part of a child's development. They increase a child's self-confidence and help them to learn how to be more social and help them to develop their talents. Extracurricular activities are at children's help positively impacting their academic performance as well as their mental health and well-being.

We provide ample time for our children to enhance their hobbies steadily. Hobbies help children to bring out their real interests for a future career path. We have a remarkable series of co-curricular activities to enjoy like sports, debates, arts, drawing, dancing, singing, music, drama, essay writing and poetry writing. Children engage in hobbies during their free time. We ask our children to spend time learning new things, which in turn, can open their brains to gather new ideas and creative things.

1.7 Moral education

It is all about the teaching of values that distinguishes between right and wrong. Therefore, it becomes necessary to teach moral values to our children from their childhood itself. We believed that learning moral values can help our children to consolidate a certain set of values to enable community living in our orphanage. Bro. Joseph Fernando is teaching our children moral values and good habits once a week. We are hopeful that children would continue to enhance their self-discipline, social values, economic values etc. out of the moral classes.

1.8 Children's Studies in the School:

Our children enjoy going to school by school bus. School is the foremost fountain of knowledge children are exposed to. It gives a chance for them to acquire knowledge in various subjects such as geography, literature, history, mathematics, politics, Computer, and other numerous fields of learning. Education forms the foundation of our children's solid life. It is responsible for the economic, social, and political growth and development of our children in general. So schools play an important role in molding a nation's future by facilitating the all-round development of its future citizens. Our children are studying in good schools and we provide transport facilities to and fro from our orphanages.

1.8.1 Our Children's Performance in the Government Public Exam:

As far as the schooling system is concerned, we have a Government Public Exam for the 10th, 11th, and 12th standard students. As the academic year 2022-2023 has just got over, recently our State Government's Education Board published the Annual

Government Exam Results of our orphanage children. I am happy to say that almost all the children have passed the exam with good results. Once the children finish their 12th standard, they will start their University Studies or Professional Courses or Diploma Courses.

I.9 Learning Democratic Value through Children's Parliament:

Our children learn the democratic value through children's parliament. The children's parliament consists of the elected councilors who form the children's parliament council. Among the councilors, the children elect one president for the whole orphanage. This parliament and its council of elected councilors gather and have meetings every week and in that meeting, they discuss all the programmes connected with the orphanage. Every child has the right to openly bring up agendas to the council and the council has to give solutions to their problems. One of the important outcomes of this children's parliament is the self-management of the orphanage. The orphanage is managed by the children themselves through the elected council. And that running the orphanage is made easy through the functioning of the children's parliament.

I.10 Grooming family values through cottage living:

In our orphanages, all the children live in the cottages. In each cottage, ten to fifteen children will be accommodated and it is their home. They will elect among themselves a leader who will serve as a parent of the house. Of course, we will have the child's-care-giver (warden) manage two to three cottages. Each cottage will have its own meeting and they assign among themselves the different needs-based assignments. The assignments will include serving food, providing drinking water, cleaning the house, cleaning the serving vessels etc. The major outcome of this cottage living is to promote family values of living together and sharing the responsibility that is groomed in this system.

1.2 Celebrations:

1.2.1 Celebrating Birthdays:

Birthdays are always important days to remember in the life of each child. Children love birthday celebrations and they eagerly look forward to that particular special day every year. We celebrate everyone's birthday in our orphanage. We celebrate Bro. Sebastian, our Executive Director's birthday, and Devi Bala, one of the trustees, all the children, and all the warden residing in our orphanages. We celebrate children's birthdays of a particular month together. Children would be wished and presented gifts along with a cutting of a cake. Bro. Sebastian would be present and wish them more blessings and success. We believe that children can develop their self-esteem by celebrating their birthdays every year.

1.2.2 Celebrating Christmas:

Christmas is the festival of joy and celebrations. As usual, we grandly celebrated the Christmas festival. We prepared well for the Christmas party for all the children residing in our orphanages. By organizing a Christmas party, we keep conveying to our children an important message that they are very special. We prepared a grand Christmas dinner. Our beautiful Christmas celebration includes, such as a cake-cutting ceremony, songs, dances, and the distribution of gifts such as a new dress and blanket. After that, we all had a delicious meal. Every child was beaming with Christmas joy and a festive mood. The outcome of this festival is the importance of honoring the religious values in one's life.

1.2.3 Pongal:

Pongal is the festival of harvest and it is the prime festival for the people of Tamil Nadu and all the Tamilians all over the world. It is all about remembering the good harvest and thanking God for his blessings over a year in producing a good harvest. It is the four days of the festival in which the Sun God and all the animals are remembered and thanked especially. The word Pongal is also meant a dish made out of new rice, coconut milk, country sugar, and other spices cooked together. When this dish would be overflowing it

symbolizes 'prosperity' to the people. The cooked sweet rice would be shared among the family members. Our children in our orphanages cooked Pongal and enjoyed eating together. In the late afternoon, child caregivers organized several sports and games for our children. Our children participated joyfully and enjoyed the Pongal Festival. The most important outcome of celebrating this festival is the significance of the cultural values of our State of Tamil Nadu.

1.2.4 Deepavali:

Deepavali is one of the most important festivals in India. It symbolizes the spiritual Victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. St. Joseph's Development Trust grandly celebrated the Deepavali festival. Festive meals were prepared for our children and new dresses were distributed to all the children living in our orphanage. Children cracked firecrackers at night after the delicious dinner. This celebration signifies the importance of religious values to our lives and to the lives of our children.

1.2.5 Independence Day:

We celebrated our Independence Day in our orphanages with festivities. We remembered our national heroes/heroines who gave up their lives to liberate India from the clutches of the colonial British Empire. Our celebrations were flavored with patriotic fervor and zeal. The whole ambiance vibrated with the festivity, painting the home premises in the flamboyant hues of Tricolor. We hoisted our National Flag and honored it with the pride of being Indians. We distributed sweets to all the participants. The important outcome of celebrating our Independence Day is the spirit of sacrifice and self-giving.

I.2.6 Republic Day:

It is celebrated on the 26th of January every year. It came into force on January 26, 1950. On this day, the Indian Constitution came into force and the country was declared the largest democracy in the world. And since that day We, Indians, started celebrating January 26 as Republic Day. The Constitution gave all citizens the power to govern themselves by choosing their government. We celebrated our Republic Day with a hoisting of our National Flag. We shared sweets among ourselves. The important outcome of this celebration is helping our children to inculcate the value of patriotism right from their childhood.

2. Special Home and School for differently-abled Children and Adults

2.1 Daily Learning Activities for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children and Adults:

2.1.1 Pudhu Udhayam:

We have children living at Pudhu Udhayam which is a residential school for those below 14 years of age. Since it is a special school for physically as well as mentally challenged children, their main objective for their learning is focused on mastering all the Activities for Daily Life Skills [ADLS] gradually. This would facilitate them to be self-reliant at least to some extent. These skills involve learning a few basic skills such as brushing, dressing, undressing, combing, bathing, etc.

2.1.2 Daily Class:

Apart from their daily learning of the Activities for Daily Life Skills, they are also taught how to write alphabet letters and draw lines of various types. They would be also learning about different shapes and how to draw them. With time, they would also learn about numbers starting from 1, 2, and 3, etc. Among them, quick learners would be taught to write their names and addresses. In addition, the children with disabilities engage themselves in daily prayer and Yoga in the morning. They engage also in some

basic cleaning activities in general. They would water also the gardens and undergo some physical therapeutic activities under the well-trained physiotherapist. They do some leisure activities such as games and watching TV in the evening.

2.2 Pudhu Vidiyal:

It is a residential cum vocational Training Centre established in the Pudhu Udhayam Campus itself. This special school is meant for physically and mentally challenged persons above 18 years of age. They would attend class in the morning. Students are being taught about numbers, writing their names calculating time, and some general idea about money concepts which involves their learning the difference between Coins and Bills. In the afternoon, we have a special teacher who would assist them in their involvement in vocational training such as gardening, goat rearing, and handcrafts-making.

2.2.1 Handcrafts- making:

Our adult students would be involved in making ornamental necklaces and chains with strings of beads in the afternoon. We also have a programme which enables our students in producing toilet cleaning liquid. We call it Phenol. We are supplying to a particular institution our phenol product every month. We value their engagement very highly in producing something out of their limited capacities. Thus, we see to it that all the abled students of Pudhu Vidiyal get appropriate training in making handcrafts and other things that would be crucial and useful for their future life once they are out of our program.

2.2.2 Goat-rearing:

The abled adult members of our Pudhu Vidiyal would engage in goat-rearing in the late afternoon. We provide a good ambiance for our handicapped children to take care of our goats by pasturing them in the field inside our campus. Our adult members would accompany them into the green pasture. They would bring them back to the shed safely

after an hour. This training has turned out to be a good one and many of our members enjoy doing this activity and are also able to develop an emotional bond with their goats. We have so many goats in our orphanage and many of them give birth to kids.

3. Village Outreach Programmes and Activities

3.1 Village Outreach:

St. Joseph's Development Trust is committed to the downtrodden, poor, and marginalized. It keeps working to promote the transformation of their well-being. St. Joseph's Development Trust has been accelerating its development activities by taking up specific issues like poverty alleviation, casteism, and discrimination, women's rights, child labour, rural development, environmental issues, etc. SJDT plays an immense role in bringing social change and development in the rural areas of Dindigul, Theni, and Nagapattinam Districts. We actively work for promoting education, particularly among weaker sections of the population where girls are neglected or denied to get their basic education. It focuses mostly on the poor households of Kodaikanal hills where the educational and social infrastructure for education are not good. We identify the most neglected girls in these areas. We provide education to these children, more particularly SCs and STs has been its targeted objective. We engage actively in the Nagapattinam District, especially in providing education to the poorest children ever since the time of the Tsunami. We work closely with poor people and play an important role in educating and motivating people to fight for their rights.

3.2 Program for Women Empowerment:

We acknowledge that women are the other vulnerable section of society. More women are sensitized about their rights and what they can do with their lives. More and more women are working actively in the social sphere. Our staff conduct a lot of awareness programmes for women and enable them to participate in the important process of achieving economic stability in the family. It has been the role of SJDT to move towards development by creating awareness among people with proper interventions regarding women's self-reliance in the patriarchal society.

3.3 The Role of the Sponsorship Department:

St. Joseph's Development Trust is ever faithful to its vision and orientation in choosing the poorest and downtrodden children in the villages. Bro. Sebastian, the Executive Director of St. Joseph's Development Trust, guides the Sponsorship department with his meticulous supervision helping the sponsorship staff to execute various programmes in the villages and conduct large gatherings whenever it is needed. The staff of the sponsorship department would visit various villages and select the deserving children for our programmes. They are responsible for conducting various meetings, and seminars for both children and the family members of our sponsored children.

3.4 Field Visit:

3.4.1 School Visit:

Our staff from the sponsorship department visit the schools of our children once a month. Our staff maintains a cordial relationship with headmasters and class teachers as they regularly interact with them concerning our children's education, difficulties, discipline, personal issues, and personal accompaniment that has to be followed up in the orphanages. Our staff would provide a report to our Executive Director concerning each child's overall performance in the school.

3.4.2 Home Visit:

Our staff's visit to school helps them to interact with the parents of our sponsored children as they visit the parents in their villages. Our staff would bring the specific matters and issues concerning their children's performance in the school. Our staff would provide them with counseling sessions whenever they feel necessary. Their interactions with our sponsored children's parents act similarly to narrowing down the gap between the families and SJDT.

Conclusion:

We are confident that all our initiatives taken in the past year for the welfare of our children would help our young underprivileged children to live a dignified life and to succeed in their lives. We are giving young children an opportunity to shine, and a platform for success in the real world. This platform can usher in the dawn of a better tomorrow for underprivileged children. And, for that reason, we are hopeful that our children will be among the next generation of citizens who can be brightening our nation. Most of all, we realize that there is much more to be grateful for than we even realize. We could do so much for our children with your great generosity.

We express our sincere gratitude to Erwin Krol, Jeroen and Jan, all our donors, sponsors, and well-wishers for their support to carry out all the programs and projects of our institution.