



Everyone's darling

Neeraj is Merry Barua's only child. Twenty years ago she discovered he was autistic.

Looking around, she realised, there was no organised counsel or help. So Merry took herself to the USA and learnt how to care for him. How? She closeted herself alone with her son in a room for 11 long months. That helped her understand this puzzled visitor from another planet

In 1991, she started in Delhi, the sub-continent's first school --'Open Door'-- for special children. Since then her reach has grown nationwide through her resource centre, Action For Autism.

Merry Barua is widely acknowledged around the world as a pioneer and tireless worker in

the cause of autists. She is an educator, communicator and social and political activist. Above all, she is an inspiring role model for many despairing parents.

When she was a baby, her grandmother would call her, 'Meri Jaan' ['My darling']. And that's how she got the unusual name, 'Merry'. Her grandma had been quite prophetic. But not entirely-- she didn't know Merry would become more than just **her** darling.

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