



ROTARY INDIA AWARD

"Rotary India Award" for year 2003 was presented to Manovikas Kendra Rehabilitation Institute for their outstanding effort in the betterment of the mentally challenged

The problems and difficulties faced by mentally challenged people in India are myriad. They are shunned by the society, educational institutions are indifferent and prospective employers hardly consider them for employment. Highlighting these challenges and to generate mass awareness on their problems, Rotary Awards for Service to Humanity (India) Trust decided to focus this year's annual Rotary India award, 12th in the series, on 'Caring for the Mentally Challenged'.

At a glittering ceremony held at the Chinmaya Mission Auditorium in New Delhi on April 19, 2004, the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat presented the Twelfth Rotary India Award, 2003, to Manovikas Kendra Rehabilitation and research Institute, Kolkata, in recognition of their consistent commitment and dedication to the care and rehabilitation of mentally challenged children and for attaining excellence in this field. Dr Sharda Fatephuria, the founder and Director of Manovikas Kendra received the recognition on behalf of the institution.

Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat also honoured Action for Autism, a voluntary non-profit NGO, based in Delhi. With a Special Commendation for their outstanding service in promoting the concept of autism



DR. SHARDA FATEHPURIA OF MANOVIKAS KENDRA RECEIVING THE ROTARY INDIA AWARD 2003 FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUSTEE RAJENDRA K. SABOO AND TRUSTEE SUDARSHAN AGARWAL LOOK ON

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Honourable Vice
President of India, Shri
Bhairon Singh
Shekhawat presented
the Twelfth Rotary India
Award, 2003 to
Manovikas Kendra
Rehabilitation and
Research Institute,
Kolkata

in the country and for providing opportunities to autistic children to lead independent productive lives and become an integral part of society. Mrs. Merry Barua, Director, Action for Autism, received the recognition on behalf of the organization.

The annual Rotary India Award, the highest honour given by Rotary in India, has been instituted by the Rotary Awards for Service to Humanity (India) Trust and is given every year for excellence in humanitarian service to individuals

and voluntary organizations for their contribution in different fields. The focal theme of the Award is changed every year. The main award consists of a cheque for Rs. Two Lakhs and a citation. The Special Commendation recipient this year was given a cheque for Rs. One Lakh and a citation.

Complimenting Rotary and in particular the Rotary Awards for Service to Humanity (India) Trust for insituting such a significant award, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat urged the Rotarians and the public in general to make a commitment to end unfair prejudice towards the disabled. He appealed to the Rotarians to use their skills and resources to motivate the society to take care of the differently able people. He said, "It is our duty and not an obligation". The Vice President further added, "You must identify those who have the capacity and the will to do something for the society and fully motivate them and I can assure you that there would be no problem in this country for which we cannot find a solution. Work with a missionary spirit and draw up short and long term plans for facing the challenges and you would never suffer for want of funds".

A total of 98 nominations were received for this year's award from all over India. The recipient for the award was selected by a high level jury presided over by Justice Dr. A S Anand, Retd. Chief Justice of India and Chairman, National Human rights Commission, Dr (Mrs) Aloka Guha, Chairperson, National Trust, Dr. Abid Hussain, former Ambassador to USA and Mr. H K Dua, Editor-in-Chief, The Tribune, Chandigargh. The jury's choice of Manovikas Kendra was unanimous.

The jury also decided that Action for Autism, be presented with Special Commendation for their sustained advocacy to recognize autism as a disability.

Accepting the award on behalf of Manovikas Kendra, Dr Sharada Fatehpuria said that she was overwhelmed by the recognition given to the institution. She said that in India more than 60 million people of all ages have disabilities and are living in diverse socio-economic environment. She said, "These people have special needs and depend on a variety of factors including family and community attitudes. Providing care to these people with disabilities is a mammoth task. I request the Rotarians to continue their support to the cause of the mentally challenged. Manovikas Kendra will provide technical support".

Welcoming the distinguished guests to what he called the "Celebration of Excellence", Rtn. Rajesh Batra, the host District Governor, RI District 3010, and Trustee said, "A society which cannot take care of the physically and mentally disabled persons cannot call itself a civilized society. Rotary clubs should take inspiration from the awardees and take up co-ordinated and concerted programs throughout the country to meet the challenges in this area".

KNOW MORE

Since its inception in 1974, **Manovikas Kendra Rehabilitation and Research Institute**, Kolkata has emerged as an institution of pride, excellence and caring. Dr. Sharda Fatehpuria, the founder of this institute noticed the mentally challenged being left all alone in school and at home. In order to stretch a helping hand to the unfortunate, Manovikas Kendra was born. This institute welcomed the needy with a lot of love and affection in order to completely transform them into confident individuals. Number of children from different strata of the population with physical and mental disabilities, through dedicated efforts of Manovikas Kendra have realized that they too are productive members of this society just like the others.

This institution is gradually receiving recognition globally through its constant efforts to help the deprived. An interesting insight herewith is that this institute offers a variety of services like infant stimulation and management, assessment and counseling, community based rehabilitation, therapeutic treatment, vocational training, research and generation of public awareness. Through its persistent dedication, this institute has established milestones in the area of providing assistance to these children. No wonder, this institute was given the Rotary India award for its unparallel contribution for the care of mentally challenged.



MRS. MERRY BARUA OF THE ACTION FOR AUTISM RECEIVING THE SPECIAL COMMENDATION FROM VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA. ALSO PRESENT IN THE PICTURE DR. ALOKA GUHA

Chairman of the Trust and Past Rotary International President Rajendra K Saboo welcomed the Vice President of India and said that it was special privilege to Rotary that he had consented to give away the award. He added that the Rotary India Award was an instrument to recognize excellence in humanitarian service.

Welcoming the Governor of Uttaranchal and Past Rotary International Director, Mr Sudarshan Agarwal, Mr. Rajendra Saboo said that Mr. Agarwal has been pursuing with conviction various humanitarian causes even while discharging his constitutional responsibilities.

Past Rotary International Director Rtn O P Vaish recollected the history of the Trust and the Rotary India Award since its inception. On behalf of the jury, Dr. Aloka Guha explained the criteria which guided the jury to confer the award on Manovikas Kendra.

The recipient of the Special Commendation, Mrs Merry Barua of Action for Autism, said, "We have been fortunate enough to touch hundreds of lives across the coun-

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Rotary India Award is a platform for recognizing splendid performance in humanitarian service and also their selfless service towards helping the vulnerable sections of the society.

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STILL MORE

Action for Autism is a voluntary non-profit organization founded in the year 1991 by Mrs. Merry Barua. Mrs. Barua herself is a parent of an autistic child. This noble organization was established with the prime motive to help the autistic children. Services offered by this organization are diagnostic evaluation and assessment of each and every child, followed by networking and providing counseling services to families, sharing of achievements and setbacks, information dissemination through workshops, seminars, publication of journals and other literature and referral home-based management programmes. Through these activities, this esteemed organization has lent a hand of opportunities to the autistic children in order that they emerge as responsible and productive members of the society.

Establishment of this organization has largely influenced the policy makers to look at autism as a disability and to help others overcome the challenges emerging out of the same. Society would in turn get conscious and aware of such a disability, thereby increasing the resources and facilities for the persons with autism and other mental disabilities. This would help them adjust themselves with the mainstream. This organization helps foster parent's organizations in other cities through networking and training workshops. Hats off to Mrs. Merry Barua for her stupendous efforts in enhancing the lives of autistic children.

Themes and recipients for these awards are different each year. Every year different themes are recognized and the organizations that have done maximum work on that particular theme are given credit to. Milestones of Rotary India Awards since its inception.

Year	Theme	Recipient
1992	Literacy	Avinashlingam of Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore – A Deemed University
1993	Family Planning	Shri Sheikh Vazir Patel, a social activist from Amravati (Maharashtra)
1994	Environment: Pollution Control	Tarun Bharat Sangh, Bheekampura, Alwar District, Rajasthan
1995	Child Welfare and Development	Society for Educational and Economic Development (SEED), Sriperambudur, Tamil Nadu
1996	Education: The Girl Child	Kasthurba Gandhi Kanya Gurukulam, Vedaraniyam, Tamil Nadu
1997	Public Health and Sanitation	Nagar Swachhta Abhiyan Samiti, Chandausi, Dist.Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
1998	Literacy	Brahmacharini Kamla Bai, Founder and Administrator, Digambar Jain Adarsh Mahila Vidyalyaya, Sri Mahavirji, Sawai Madhopur Dist.Rajasthan
1999	Elimination of Child Labour	M.Venkatarangaiya Foundation, Hyderabad
2000	Population Stabilisation and Development	Mrs.C.K.Gariyali, IAS, Vice Chairperson, Science City, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
2001	Women's Empowerment	Maharshi Karve Stree Shikshan Samstha, Pune and Smt.Rehana Abid, Social Activist, Disha Social Organisation, Sultanpur Chilkana, Dist.Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh
2002	Water Management	Shri Shamjibhai Antala, Founder, Saurashtra Lok Manch Dhoraji, Dist.Rajkot (Gujarat)
2003	Mentally Challenged Children	Manovikas Kendra Rehabilitation and Research Institute, Kolkata

try and every life that we have touched makes our efforts worthwhile". Mrs Merry Barua thanked Rotary for recognizing their organization.

Congratulating the recipients, the Governor of Uttaranchal and Past Rotary International Director, Mr. Sudarshan Agarwal said, "My 15 months experience in Raj Bhawan at Dehradun has reinforced my faith in the essential goodness and decency of the common man. The values that have guided me in pursuing my mission of enriching the lives of my people are actually the values that I have imbibed as a Rotarian all through my life".

The function which was hosted by RC Noida Central, was attended by a host of celebrities such as

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Rotary Clubs must not only undertake multifarious projects around the country but must also take a lot of inspiration from the awardees.
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Mr. Brijmohan Lal Munjal, Mr Govind Hari Singhania, Aswini Kar and Dr. Abid Hussain. In addition representatives from the Government, NGO's, International Health Organisations and Rotarians from Delhi and adjoining areas were present in large numbers. The presentation ceremony was compered by the noted danseuse Ms. Shovana Narayan and ended with an expression of thanks by Rtn Asit Mittal, President of RC Noida Central.

The Rotary India Award has again emphasized that as a pioneer service organisation Rotary embodies a commitment to the community and to humanity at large.