



Annual Report

2022-23

AARTI HOME
VIJAY FOUNDATION TRUST (ASSOCIATION)
KADAPA, ANDHRA PRADESH

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Readers,

I am writing to you today to thank you for your continued support. Your generosity makes it possible for us to continue our work of making a difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

Aarti for Girls, under the legal entity Vijay Foundation Trust, is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to uplifting unfortunate women and girls and fighting for gender equality. We work with abandoned and needy children, and unfortunate women to bring them into mainstream society by providing the means to live a normal life. We believe that everyone deserves a chance to live a healthy, happy, fulfilling and dignified life.

Since founding our Trust in 1992, we have helped many girls and women realize their dreams and live dignified lives. To achieve these, we have established Aarti Village, a home for abandoned and needy children; Aarti English Medium School, a school where the most economically backward students are provided quality education, and Lalitha Cooperative for women to empower them by employability skills and leadership training. We also provide free meals, medical checkups, and job training opportunities.

Today, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of optimism and purpose as I reflect on our journey. The challenges we have faced may seem formidable, but are not unsurmountable. Remarkable transformations have become possible when passionate individuals come together with a shared vision.

I am grateful for your support, generosity and commitment to making a difference in the world. Your donations have enabled us to provide support and essential services to those who need them most. I am very excited to present this annual report for 2022-2023.

Thank you once again, and looking forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

P.V. Sandhya

Founder President, Aarti Home

Vijay Foundation Trust Association, Kadapa.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

1. Smt. P. V. Sandhya, President
2. Smt. B. Durga Kumari, Secretary
3. Sri. Jayesh Ranjan, I.A.S, Treasurer
4. Dr P. Bali Reddy, Member
5. Sri. P. Uma Maheswara Reddy, Member
6. Smt. R. Bhadravathi, Member
7. Dr T. Vindhya, Member
8. Smt. Shyamala Rajaram, Member
9. Smt. P. Swathi, Member
10. Sri. G. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, Member
11. Sri. R. V. Shivanand Reddy, Member

Aarti Home

Aarti Home - a shelter for girls

Aarti Home, also known as Aarti Village, was founded in 1992 with the goal of eradicating gender bias in society. Rani (name changed) was the first girl child to live there. As the word got out, Aarti Home began to accept an increasing number of children. We had to relocate twice in order to cater to the shelter needs of an ever-increasing number of children. Aarti Home is now situated in a tranquil 2.5-acre site at the foot of Palakondalu, and today houses 122 girl children aged 5 to 22 years. Aarti Home is based on the concept of community living, with the children living in cottages under the care of a house mother. There are nine cottages, each of which can accommodate 15 children. Aarti Home meets all the children's physical needs, such as food, education, housing, and emotional needs, as they grow up to be responsible citizens. Regular health checkups ensure their good health.

The children are ready to meet the future when it is time for them to leave our care. Those children have gone on to become software engineers, medical care professionals, teachers, managers, and accountants. They are well-settled in life and some of them are happily married.

Women's Education Project and Ripple Effect workshop

Aarti Home in collaboration with Women's Education Project is running a Leadership Academy which provides an inclusive, exploratory environment for young women from marginalised backgrounds. They are encouraged to discover their inner spark, nurture their leadership potential and enhance their socio-emotional learning. This happens as they are transitioning into careers of their own choosing to gain economic independence



and become leaders in their homes,

communities and society. The academy conducted a certificate course for these women named "**Ripple Effect Workshop**". The girls who attended this were at this stage ready to impact the community and lives around them with their inner spark, social and emotional competence and leadership. This creates the changemaker and influencer in

the young women at the Leadership Academy. The workshop was attended by 5 Aarti Girls, who were participants in the Leadership Academy.

In preparing them to **be the change-makers in the community** the girls were encouraged to identify challenges faced by their communities and speak up on these issues. The students spoke about issues like child marriages and female feticide in their communities. They also presented these issues in the form of **Burra Katha** - a local art form, which they learnt as part of storytelling. All the participants of the Ripple Effect workshop were presented with certificates.



Success stories of the children from Aarti Home

i. Aarti to Akasa:

Akasa Air is India's newest airline, and three of our girls have been employed by them in their IT department. Moving to a large city like Mumbai from a small town like Kadapa has been a remarkable achievement in their lives. We wish them the best of luck in future.



Our three girls bid an emotional farewell to Aarti home before starting the new journey of life

ii. Saathiya Trainees



Saathiya is an NGO that runs an institute that trains people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to become professionals in the hospitality industry. Five of our girls, Dastageeramma, Siva Jyothi, Ramya, Ramalakshmi, and Aishwarya, were sent to this institute. They are now working in various capacities in hotels like Ibis, Grand Mercure, Starbucks, and 46 Ounces, all located in Bangalore.

Saathiya's initiative has helped these girls realise their dreams of working in the hospitality industry

iii. Nursing Students

We are proud of three of our girls who are pursuing graduation in nursing in different colleges in the state. They have passed their second-year exams and will become full-fledged nursing professionals in 2025. We wish them luck.

iv. Preparing for UPSC Civil Services

We endeavor to provide every opportunity for our children to pursue their goals. One of our girls Ms. Sowmika is in Bangalore undergoing coaching to appear for the 2023 Civil Services Examination. We wish her luck.

Aarti English Medium School



Aarti English Medium School began as a stop-gap school in 2007 for the sole benefit of Aarti children. It is now a full-fledged school with 709 children and caters to the needs of Kadapa's underprivileged children. The Andhra Pradesh government has recognized the school which accepts students from classes 1 to 10. The school has secured a 100% pass percentage in the SSC board examination conducted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Post Covid, the strength of the school has grown enormously and this necessitated shifting the primary school to Aarti

Village. The Primary school follows the Government of Andhra Pradesh state syllabus. The curriculum is enriched with interactive and activity-based learning using the Maria Montessori methodology.

Aarti Creative School

The students of the Aarti School are first-generation literates and come from the most underprivileged families. Most of these children have never attended school and are over-aged for the class they were admitted into. Aarti established the Creative School as a bridge school where these kids are admitted to address the issue of being over-age. They are given special attention to bridge the gap in their learning after which they are moved to the mainstream school. The creative school is partially sponsored by a corporate named e-Clerx. The bridge school had 508 students, 16% of these were promoted to the mainstream school, exceeding our expectation of 10%. It's encouraging to see that more than 60% of the children can secure 60% plus marks in Science and Maths. Children who fall behind in class X are encouraged to take the tests offered by the Open School Board, and every candidate has passed.

Aarti Family-Based Care

The family, being the primary social group, is the finest environment for the child to develop. It is well-known that children who live in this social group develop physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually more quickly. Keeping this in mind, we developed a novel program called "Family Based Care". The children reside at home with their parents and continue to attend school during the day while the parents are away at work. Aarti provides the child with three wholesome meals, a uniform, stationery, and transportation as part of this program. The program started initially with 30 children and was a great success. This prompted us to offer this program to a much larger number. Currently, all students of Aarti School are benefiting from this program. Regular grade-based assessments, well-being check-ups, and home visits are used to evaluate the children's overall development. We have discovered that these children have responded to tender loving care and have developed an interest in learning.



Our hardworking Ayammas are preparing lunch for our children



The school employs 37 teachers currently.



The teachers and students of the Aarti family having lunch together.

Mid-day meals

Aarti Home has been tirelessly working towards addressing the issue of hunger and malnutrition among children. We provide nutritious mid-day meals to all children regardless of their socio-economic background.

We source fresh ingredients daily and prepare balanced meals that meet the nutritional requirements of growing children. The menu includes a variety of wholesome foods like eggs, rice, pulses and vegetables.

The mid-day meal program also promotes social interaction and a sense of belonging among the children in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

The parents of the students are kept informed of their child's progress through frequent parent teacher conferences. The parents are apprised of their child's overall development during these meetings. Parents of the graduating students are provided with career counseling suggestions for their children and are given a tour of the vocational training facilities that offer income-generating courses.



The President of Aarti for Girls interacting with one of the students and her mother.



Parents of class X students in a meeting with the Aarti teachers

Saturday Open Learning Activities (SOLA)

Aarti School believes that education is not confined to the four walls, but is a continuous process of enhancing creativity and knowledge through activity-based learning. Saturday Open Learning Activities (SOLA) are organised where students engage in activities like spoken English, calligraphy, singing, dancing, quizzes, story narration, poetry, sports, and many more. The theme-based activities are based on real-life situations and general awareness.



With a smile and great excitement, the Aarti girls are showing their creativity on the theme of recycling.



A dance class is in full swing. One day, some of our Aarti students may as well become great dancers too.

Social Investigation:

We firmly believe that the relationship between the students and the teachers is most important for the student's overall development. This relationship is built through home visits by the teachers once (or twice) every year. We have noticed that the bonding between the teachers and the students has strengthened. The teachers are now able to understand the family's socio-economic conditions and they can effectively deal with the emotional/academic issues of the students. The students also feel proud as their teachers have visited their homes.

Inauguration of Libraries

Two libraries, one in Aarti Village and another in Aarti School, were inaugurated in the presence of Aarti family members. We are extremely grateful to our generous donors Dr Subrahmanyam Boyareddi and Smt. Subhashini from Texas (USA) for this gift that will benefit the school for years to come. At the inauguration ceremony, the donor spoke about their motivation for donating. They shared their love of reading, desire to help



others, and hope that the library will be a place where people can come and learn together.



It is hoped that these libraries will ignite the passion and love for reading among the students. With this access to information and resources, the students will become independent learners and seekers.

Mindfulness workshop for the teachers

A week long Mindfulness workshop was conducted to cultivate a state of present-moment awareness and non-judgmental attitude among the teachers of Aarti. The facilitators were Indumathi Ravishankar, Aruna Reddy, and Sunil Kanth Rachamadugu. The workshop was very interactive, and there was a constant sharing of viewpoints between the participants. The discussions focussed on emotions, team building, self-awareness, self-compassion, gratitude, forgiveness and self-care.



The workshop also included experiential exercises, discussions, and guidance from an experienced facilitator. The participants were encouraged to be aware of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without judgment.



The feedback from the teachers included various benefits like reduced stress, improved focus and concentration, enhanced emotional well-being, and better resilience in facing challenges. Teachers were of the opinion that mindfulness can contribute to healthier relationships, increased creativity, and a greater sense of satisfaction. It was, indeed, a successful session.

Awareness Workshop on Sanitization

An awareness program on hand sanitization was conducted in Aarti Primary School and High School on 18th October 2022, with the help of our German volunteers. It highlighted the importance of using hand sanitizers as an effective way to kill germs and prevent the spread of diseases. The program focused on the need to use hand sanitizers, proper hand sanitising techniques, and the importance of hand sanitization in various settings, including homes, schools, and public spaces.



Establishment of a new Computer Lab

Aarti School installed another Computer Lab to facilitate computer-based learning and enhance students' digital skills. Aarti School received 42 computers from INFOSYS in October, and the lab became operational in December, 2022. Setting up the lab involved careful planning, procurement, installation, and testing to ensure an efficient and conducive environment for students and teachers. The computer lab has been operating successfully, providing students and teachers with a well-equipped functional learning environment.



Collaborations with other Organisations:

Paadhai

Paadhai (meaning PATH in Tamil) is a Non-Governmental Organisation, based out of Bangalore, aims to guide disadvantaged and underprivileged Indian populations through education and empowerment. Aarti Home has partnered with Paadhai to provide an **“Enhanced Learning Environment”**. ELE’s primary focus is to mentor teachers and create curated content that is interesting to students. As part of this initiative, volunteers from Paadhai are mentoring Science teachers (both Biology and Physics) and teaching them innovative and interesting methods of teaching the subject.

The Innovation Story

The Innovation Story is a team of passionate educators from globally acclaimed universities united to equip children with cutting-edge skills for their future careers. TIS strives to inspire and transform children through experiential learning; seeing them change and grow as they create things with their own hands. The Innovation Story has partnered with Aarti Home to provide our children with digital literacy, App development (Scratch) and web development (HTML and PHP). Since the start of this partnership, 120 students of Aarti Home have undergone training with TIS.

e-Clerx

e-Clerx is a company that provides business process management, automation and analytics services to a number of Fortune 2000 enterprises. These include some of the world’s leading financial services, communications, retail, fashion, media & entertainment, manufacturing, travel & leisure, and technology

companies. Children's education and child rights are central to their Corporate Social Responsibility. e-Clerx sponsors a part of the expenses for running the creative school.

Asha for Education

Asha for Education is a fully volunteer-run non-profit organisation based in the USA having 50+ chapters around the world. Their mission is to catalyse socio-economic economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children. As part of this initiative, Asha for Education has partnered with Aarti Home to partially sponsor the expenses of running Aarti English Medium School.

GiveIndia

GiveIndia is a donation platform that allows an individual to support a cause of his/her choice from about 200 NGOs that have been scrutinised for transparency and credibility. GiveIndia enables individuals and institutions to donate funds to chosen causes and delivers programs with high-impact outcomes across India. With a strong network of partners and a vast geographical presence, GiveIndia brings people and organisations closer to realising a poverty-free India. Aarti Home is one of the credible NGOs identified and is being supported for the following causes.

- Educate a poor and deserving student in Aarti School by sponsoring staff salaries for 2 weeks
- Help an abandoned/orphaned girl in Aarti home receive good care by sponsoring staff salaries for 10 days
- Provide clothing, school supplies and health care to an abandoned girl in Aarti Home for a year
- Sponsor nutritious meals for a girl residing in Aarti Home
- Provide shelter to abandoned girls
- Help Children at Aarti create a better future
- Mission "No Child Homeless"
- Life skills for children with learning difficulties

Festivities at Aarti English Medium School

Independence Day Celebration

Aarti celebrated the 76th National Independence Day with immense pride and enthusiasm. On August 15th, the Aarti School campus became a vibrant hub of patriotism as students, teachers, and staff came together to commemorate the freedom struggle and honor the nation's independence.





The celebration began with the hoisting of the Indian national flag accompanied by the singing of the national anthem, filling the atmosphere with patriotism.

Students clad in colourful attire presented captivating dances, melodious songs, speeches and stirring performances that reflected the country's cultural heritage.

In addition, competitions like essay writing, drawing, and quiz contests were organised in order to enhance

students' understanding of India's history and freedom struggle.

Christmas Celebration

Christmas was celebrated in Aarti Primary School with the esteemed dignitaries from NATA and Mr H. Arvind, Commissioner, of Public Distribution System. This festive event brought students, teachers, and staff together to celebrate the spirit of Christmas. The celebration included various activities and traditions that evoked a sense of joy, warmth, and togetherness.

Our teachers and the children decorated the classrooms, hallways, and common areas with Christmas-themed decorations, such as Christmas trees, wreaths, and twinkling lights. The children enthusiastically performed beautiful dances, skits and recited poems based on Christmas.



Republic Day Celebration

Aarti School celebrated Republic Day on the 26th of January each year to commemorate the day when the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950, marking the country's transition to a sovereign republic.



This year, the school administration, teachers, and students planned the programme well in advance. Students actively rehearsed for various activities like cultural dances, speeches, and acrobatic performances. They also practiced patriotic songs, dances, and speeches that showcase the spirit and diversity of India.

The day began with the flag-hoisting ceremony. Students were told about the importance of the national flag and the significance of the Republic Day.

Some of the teachers spoke about the Constitution and the rights and duties of citizens.

Lalitha Women's Cooperative

Lalitha Women's Cooperative was established in February 2003 to impart women with leadership and employability skills. The members of this group own a business that creates high-quality clothing, drapes, and home furnishing items.

The cooperative currently has eleven women and two men who have been trained and are retained as tailors. These talented seamstresses contribute to VFT's training programs and produce high-quality clothing. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they finished sewing more than 15000 masks and 20000 bags to distribute dry-ration kits.



One notable event was the delivery of 400 designer Potlis as wedding gifts to one of our regular customers from the US. The orders from various customers help showcase the tailors' skills and talents as designers as they stitched designer frocks, dresses, and blouses with utmost care and creativity. They have also provided 150 sets of table mats and runners as wedding gifts and return gifts, which were well received and appreciated by the recipients.

They organised three successful sales events to further promote the products. The first and second events occurred at JP Morgan, Hyderabad, and the third was held in a gated community called Hi-tech City. During these events, an extensive range of products was displayed including dresses, table mats, jewellery purses and wallets, an assortment of shoulder bags, and many more. Lalita Coop also offers customised services like embroidery and personalization with different names and appliques on products like baby sets, wallets, and toilet cases.

Children for Children

Abhiram, Ananya and Vaanya grew up playing with Aarti children. During the Covid lockdown, they were in Kadapa and were witness to the immense suffering of their friends, who were going hungry without food at school. While they missed physically attending their respective schools, their friends were going without education and food. They called on their friends and other past volunteers at Aarti to create a group called '**Children for Children**' and were pleasantly surprised and thrilled to see 70 children from across the world rise up to help and take leadership in creating awareness, raising money, finding teaching material and volunteering to support physically.

Books Distribution under C4C

Distribution of books to children is a valuable initiative that profoundly impacts their education and personal development. Aarti family conducted a book distribution programme under the aegis of the Children for Children Initiative. We are dedicated to promoting literacy and education and work tirelessly to ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds can access books and the opportunities they bring.



Distribution of Scholarships

The after effects of COVID have caused severe problems in the society and many of the children were not able to continue their education. Children for Children has identified 239 such students and these children were provided scholarships to continue with their studies. On the 17th of July 2022, the children and their parents have been invited for an interaction and the scholarships amounting to a total of Rs.36.00 lakhs have been distributed to these children.

Bio Mass-cum Solar Drier small and marginal farmers

During the harvesting season, the Indian rural landscape is laden with fruits and vegetables. It is heartbreaking for the farmers as they do not find the right price for their produce, as it gets wasted or remains un-harvested forcing the farmers into deeper debt. The small and marginal farmers are unable to preserve their produce due to insufficient food processing infrastructure. A few options available for food preservation are salting, pickling and drying. Pickling and salting require extra costs, which the farmers could not afford, the only option available to them is drying. Drying directly in the sun results in issues with hygiene and loss of colour and nutrients due to UV exposure. Various solar driers are available in the market, that are relatively expensive and difficult to maintain for small and marginal farmers.



To overcome the associated issues, a low-cost solar-cum biomass drier has been designed and built by Abhiram Rachamadugu, a grade 12 student who has been volunteering with Aarti Home for a long time. This drier can be constructed with a cost of less than Rs.15000, using locally available materials. One such drier has been constructed in Aarti Village and is being used for drying various vegetables like tomatoes, bhindi, green chillies, eggplants etc, which are procured in bulk during the season and preserved for use during the nonseason.

It is proposed to construct these driers in villages for the benefit of the marginal farmers.

Aarti Women's Center

Development of Aarti Women's Center



Aarti ran an Open Resource Centre during the execution of Abhaya (2018 to 2020) - a project for providing overall support to women Human Rights Defenders. This centre was hugely successful and was always brimming with activities. It was noticed that more than 10,000 women visited and benefitted from this discrimination-free centre. A few women shared that they were laughing for the first time in their lives. Based on the success of this ORC, Aarti Home has decided to continue these operations on a permanent basis at Mahila Samajam.

Major repairs were carried out at the Mahila Samajam building along with the adjoining shed rented from the Women and Child Welfare department.

In addition to these alterations, a kitchen was added on the southeastern side of the campus and a new toilet block was constructed on the western side of the campus.

A shop front was also developed to enable the women in the district to showcase and sell their wares.

The centre was equipped with Embroidery muggam, sewing machines, desktop computers and a sanitary napkin-making machine.

Activities planned at the women's centre:

Aarti Women's Centre will be designed as a discrimination-free zone, where women from all walks of life without differences of caste, colour, class, religion etc are welcome. The women's centre will act as a "ONE STOP CENTRE" for all the needs of women in the region. The following are planned at the women's centre:

1. Counseling - psychological, legal and emotional.
2. Sustainable livelihood skills: Tailoring, embroidery works, computer skills, culinary skills, housekeeping skills, sanitary pad making, beautician training etc.
3. In memory of Mr. Harry from the United Kingdom, Harry's kitchen is being established. Here, we will not only teach the women culinary skills (including forgotten local delicacies) but also the opportunity to sell the prepared food in a small cafe being set up in the centre.
4. The centre will also take care of the holistic wellness of the women in the region.

Physical Wellness

- Yoga
- Self Defence Classes
- Dance classes

Social Wellness

- Own your life skills
- Legal awareness
- Financial Literacy



5. A sales cum exhibition counter, where the Micro entrepreneur women can exhibit and sell their wares.

This center is scheduled to be inaugurated by mid june.

Workshop on Menstrual Hygiene Management

Flipkart, an e-commerce company has launched their Foundation namely the Flipkart Foundation. As part of the inauguration week, they were keen to fund some impact based activities with GiveIndia's partner NGOs across India. Aarti Home was one of the partner NGOs who was approached by Flipkart to conduct a program for women beneficiaries. Based on their need, Aarti Home conducted a workshop on Menstrual Hygiene Management, on the 21st of July 2022. The target audience were the adolescent girls in the selected mandals in Kadapa district. The program was inaugurated by Ms. M.N. Rani, Project Director, Women and Child Welfare Department, Kadapa and was attended by 38 social workers, 8 teachers and 50 students (girls). The workshop was facilitated by Dr. T. Vindhya, MD (Obg & Gyn) and the president of Obstetrics and Gynecologists Society of Hyderabad. A few members from the FlipKart team also attended the program. After the awareness program, the social workers and the teachers visited the designated mandals and spoke about the importance of MHM, which aimed at removing the myths and taboos associated with menstruation. They also spoke about the new type of materials available in the market for use during the periods. Sanitary pads and IEC materials were distributed to the beneficiaries in the mandals.



Childline 1098

CHILDLINE 1098 is a 24/7 phone number that spells hope for millions of children across India. It is a 24-hour a day, 365 days a year, free, emergency phone service for children in need of aid and assistance. Aarti Home has been the nodal coordinator for childline since 2012 for Kadapa District.

Childline 1098, receives calls from children in distress and intervenes to rescue them. During the year 2022-23, Childline acted on 43 interventions, which consisted of rescuing 23 children from child marriages. In addition to helping children to tide over their problems, Childline 1098



also conducts awareness and outreach programs, the main one being ChildLine Se Dosti (CSD) celebrated to commemorate the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru. During CSD week, the children of Aarti School tied CSD bands to the District Collector, Superintendent of Police and other high level district officials. ChildLine conducted awareness on child marriages, child abuse and other child rights related issues to various schools in Kadapa district.

Visiting Dignitaries

NATA Visit

A team from NATA (North American Telugu Association) visited Aarti Home and interacted with the children from Aarti Village. They also donated Rs. 100 thousand to Aarti Home, which will be spent for the benefit of children living in Aarti Village.



Visit by Mr H Arun Kumar, I.A.S

Mr. H. Arun Kumar, Commissioner, Department of Civil Supplies, Visited Aarti Home on 21st of February 2023. He was accompanied by Mr. Dharma Chandra Reddy, RDO/Kadapa region. He met the Secretary/Aarti for Girls and Dr P. Sreenivasulu Reddy, who explained the activities being conducted by Aarti for Girls. He saw the Solar Vegetable Dehydrator designed and developed by Abhiram Rachamadugu. He also visited Aarti women's centre, which was being remodeled and renewed during the period.



Aarti Skill Training Center at Vijayawada

Aarti Home, as part of helping women of other geographical areas, is running a “**Skill Development Center**” in Kankipadu town of NTR district. This centre provides training in garment making, embroidery, beautician skills, and an English-speaking course.

Since its inception in September 2021, the centre has

- 102 women trained in garment making,
- 29 women in embroidery using maggam
- 44 women in beautician course and
- 95 women in spoken English course.

