

PRESS NOTE

Vulnerable to Icy winds and Dipping Temperatures

Delhi's street children are victim to the winter and gross forms of exploitation

Rolled up car windows and people huddled behind oversized jackets are an all too familiar site as Delhites brace themselves against the icy winds. And then there is Asha (name changed) who is desperately trying to cover her thin body with her arms. She knocks on each car window hoping to get something so she can buy a cup of hot tea or a small bite.

Even after the weather improves, Delhi streets will still continue to be home to the estimated 100,000 - 500,000 children like Asha. Children who are the worse victims of exploitation including the severest winter in many years. Children who have no home for shelter and no family to protect them.

Fourteen years ago, Udayan Care initiated Udayan Ghars, based on the Group Foster Care model. This model enables erstwhile orphaned and abandoned children to grow in a loving family environment, under the care of in-house caregivers, professional staff and neighbouring communities.

Says Dr.Kiran Modi, Managing Trustee and Founder, Udayan Care, "We believe that a loving family and home, quality education and good nutrition is the right of every child, irrespective of his/her circumstances. No child should be subject to exploitation, abuse and neglect. Hence Udayan Ghars were initiated to make sure that children who are orphaned or abandoned do not remain 'nobody's children', but enjoy childhood in a simulated family environment."

SOME FACTS :

- UNICEF reported that the number of street children in India was as high as 18 million in 2000.
- Estimates claim that Delhi's streets house between 100,000 and 500,000 of these children.
- Over 25 million children in India are orphaned
- Less than half of India's children between the age of 6 and 14 years go to school
- More than 50% of India's children are malnourished

Children at all Udayan Ghars are nurtured by mentor parents, who ensure them every joy of childhood so that they develop their full potential and live a life of dignity. The mentor parents are ordinary individuals with extraordinary sensitivity, who share their very lives with the children -an outstanding testimony to Udayan Care's belief in collective action towards restoring Child Rights.

224 children (boys and girls) have been nurtured at Udayan Ghars over the last 14 years. This year itself we have 165 children across our 12 Udayan Ghars in Delhi and NCR, Ghaziabad, Jaipur and Kurukshetra.

Transforming Lives Permanently

Jagdish, Subhash, Disha and Sushma (names changed) were near starvation when found by a group of artists at Garhi Studios, in Delhi. The artists immediately brought them to Udayan Care whom they had partnered in an art exhibition, and hence were aware the organisation worked with children who are orphaned and abandoned. Jagdish was 13 and Subhash only 6, when they came to the boys' Udayan Ghar, the Satkrishna Udayan Ghar in Narsinghpur, Gurgaon, while Disha then 14 and Sushma about 8, were taken in at Jagshanti Udayan Ghar, in Greater Noida.

With schooling from open school, and training in the kitchen of Hotel Crowne Plaza, Jagdish today at 18, to our great pride, is a working independent adult; Sushma is happily married with a baby, Disha is studying at DPS Greater Noida in class VII, and Subhash at age 12, is studying in Class 5 in Roseland Public School, Gurgaon.

Like Jagdish and his siblings, Udayan Care has been nurtured 224 children at its 12 Udayan Ghars in 4 states across India.

At our Satkrishna Udayan Ghar in Gurgaon, Subhash lives with 21 other boys in a family environment, where each child is looked after with utmost care and love. Living with and taking care of the boys is a very committed couple, and to groom the children like their own, there are two volunteer mentor mothers, who not only supervise but also fund the needs of the home.

That Suraj (name changed) is pursuing Hotel Management from a reputed institute in Delhi, may seem as no extraordinary feat. Except that 12 years ago, Suraj was one of India's 25million orphaned and abandoned children.

Working in a dhaba (road-side food stall), his daily routine was cleaning dishes and serving food to customers and not school, homework and sports. Completely unaware that **childhood was his right**, Suraj took the dhaba as his destiny. Till 1999, when his destiny changed completely.

Suraj was just 8 when Udayan Care rescued him. Enrolled in school and through his hard work and efforts of the lifetime volunteer mentor mothers in Udayan Ghars, he excelled in sports and academics. Confident to face the world, he promises **to make his mentor mothers proud of him**.

About Udayan Care :

Udayan Care is a registered Public Charitable Trust. Udayan Care provides homes to children who are orphaned while also giving girls financial and development support to continue higher education and communities to train themselves in vocations, by engaging socially committed individuals, who provide a transformative, nurturing and mentoring environment, to help them realize their full potential.

With a vision "To Regenerate the Rhythm of Life of the Disadvantaged", in 16 years, Udayan Care initiatives have transformed the lives of over 7500 children and youth in 7 states of India. The committed support of thousands of individuals enables us to continue in our mission to ensure "a nurturing home for every orphaned child, an opportunity for higher education for every girl and for every adult the dignity of self reliance and the desire to give back to society."

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About Udayan Ghars

Each Udayan Ghar is a home that operates on a unique model- where lifetime volunteer mentor parents run the home with about 15 children. Ghars are located in popular neighbourhoods and children attend private, English medium schools, and participate in vocational training and mental health programmes that help integrate them into a safe and productive community. The children in the Homes are between the ages of 6 and 20 years. Today, we cater to about 200 children in 12 homes,



where they receive the necessary mental, physical and emotional care to overcome earlier trauma and reach their full potential. Children from Ghars have gone on to lead healthy lives and remain tied to their Udayan families.

Starting with 3 children in 1 Ghar in 1996, Udayan Care currently manages 12 homes in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and UP; out of which 5 are in Delhi, 3 in NOIDA, 1 in Ghaziabad, 1 in Jaipur, and 1 in Kurukshetra, with an average of 12 to 13 children in each home; and a home for 24 boys in Gurgaon and 45 girls in Greater NOIDA. They are between the ages of 6 and 20 years. We would like to expand our activities across greater number of homes; in physical locations across different states of India. These Homes have about 165 children residing in them.

At all Udayan Ghars, children attend some of the best schools in the neighbourhood. They have access to play areas where they play cricket, football and cycle. Children regularly attend educational and recreational workshops. Conscious efforts are made for children to participate in seasonal camps that offer sports, games, songs and create a sense of belonging. The children enjoy celebrations on birthdays and holidays!