

## Peace to men of good will !

The immediate response of people who get into the school campus of St. Anthony School today is wonder, many say, what a miracle it is! It is true, the atmosphere here today fills anybody with surprise, not because it is something extra ordinary, but just because it is unusual in Indian context to have an institution like this in the middle of an isolated place. People think that anything that is done is for personal profit and cannot understand how can we do something without making a profit. There is no institution like a school, however small, no hospital, no orphanages nor other institutions of common interest or use in these area. Such thinking is not there among people where "me and mine" forms the center for the act of living.

Four years ago when ODP set out to start the project, all what we had in mind was to reach out to the most poor in the most effective way. Though educating the children living in leprosy colony was one of our priorities, the children deep in the villages who have no opportunity for education was another area of our attention. We surveyed many villages and choose an area which is most backward, more than that, the place where the school stands today was a jungle where a girl of 14 was raped and killed. Nobody dared to go to that place at that time. Some people in the beginning scared to send their children to our school just because this place was considered as haunted by the ghost of this girl. We had to go in search of children and motivate their parents. There were people from different caste approaching to tell us to keep the religious customs, not to get the untouchable touch their children, or give water to them. Today, the situation has started to change, parents in advance approach



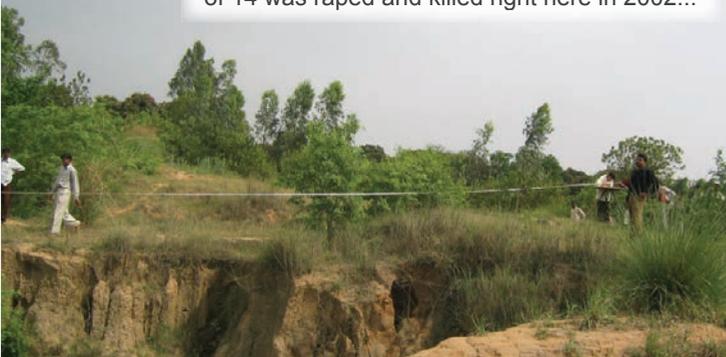
The two floors of the school building are now used.



the school to admit their children, most of them respect school rules and accept their children to mingle with the low castes. The price of the land in the area has gone high, people who had gone away from some of those village come back to live there again for educating their children. Our teachers constantly visiting the villages, social workers working around have started to bring some changes in the villages around too. Villagers are starting to understand that there are people who let go their personal interest to care and share for others !

On the whole our operations in the project areas stands for and presents a value system that is more human which gives more meaning and fulfillment for life. This value system make people to be concerned about others and these values are what Christmas brings to the world, Peace to men of good will. Merry Christmas.

Precise measurement of the land was done before constructing Saint Anthony school. A girl of 14 was raped and killed right here in 2002...



## It is Monday !

Monday is an important day for the women in the village of Thanda (5 Kms away from Saint-Anthony School). This is the day GMVS (local branch of ODP) team goes to this village to conduct mobile clinic and Self Help Group Meetings.



Dr. Archana, the doctor employed by ODP goes to many villages around school to conduct Mobile clinics and Monday is her turn in Thanda. She sits in a house in the village and examines and treats patients who come to her for treatment. There are many women waiting for this opportunity as there is no medical facility in those villages. However, there are many people yet continuing their old habits, they give least attention to their health. To motivate them and to remind them, our workers go from house to house, mainly in the houses of all the pregnant, and lactating women. Though we want all those pregnant women to come to our mobile clinic, many of their families don't allow them to go out during this period because it is their tradition that the pregnant women should stay at home.



Santa Claus, a creab and even a Christmas tree... everything can be found in Saint Anthony School !

In India, people love feasts, it gives them a chance to sing and dance and forget their struggles for some time.

After the mobile clinic the team move on for the SHG meeting. The women in these groups are more empowered. Most of them have learned to write their names and put their signatures. Many are learning to read and write. They regularly collect 10 (20 cents) rupees per week to deposit in the Bank, and have a bank book. They started going to the bank for official works. They like the meeting on every Monday because there they discuss about their problems, and learn about healthcare, family planning, child care etc.

Many of these villagers who lived under the roof for many years now have the chance to look beyond their horizons and dream of a better life. They are keen to bring up their children in a much better way and to build up their future. While they regret about their destiny they dream of a better life for their children and St. Anthony School is a great hope for many of them today !

## Happy Christmas !

I am born in a Hindu family and my parents were excommunicated when they got leprosy 25 years ago. They have been living in a leprosy colony since then and though life goes on, the stigma of leprosy still haunt my parents and I too am a victim of it. We think why God let it happen to us, this is a life worse than death. However my contact with people from ODP help me to look at life positively, I am given a new meaning for life and I have a good opportunity to go to a good school. I feel today that I can bring back some of the happiness my parents lost ! Thank you at this occasion of Christmas for making our life happier and wish all of you Happy Christmas !



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