



Empowering Women. Transforming Villages

I DREAM OF A WORLD WHERE I AM HAPPY, SAFE AND THRIVING

**Annual Report 23-24** 

# Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This year has been one of tremendous growth, learning, and reflection for all of us at empowHER India. Expanding our Setu program from one block in Raigad to three was both exciting and humbling. We took a major step forward by bringing the program into schools, which meant learning how to work closely with teachers and headmasters on a regular basis. Securing their ongoing support was one of our biggest challenges—and greatest accomplishments.



Another significant shift was introducing boys into our program design. While this came with its own set of hurdles, it was a necessary evolution. We know that to truly empower girls, we must engage boys in the conversation and journey towards equality.

As we grew, we also focused on growing ourselves. Our team more than doubled in size, and we made a conscious effort to invest in training and capacity building by bringing on experienced staff. With this expanded team, we're better equipped to deliver on our mission.

But no matter how much we do, it sometimes feels like it's never enough. Every time we hear about violence against women or witness the persistent gender inequalities in our society, we are reminded how much work remains. There is no easy fix for this, but I firmly believe that change will only happen when we start changing mindsets.

At this juncture, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all our donors and supporters who stand with us in this fight. Your belief in our mission keeps us going. I also want to extend an invitation to others who share this vision to join us—because together, we can move faster toward the world we want to see.

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## About empowHER India

With three decades of dedicated work at the grassroots level, empowHER India has positively impacted over 90,000 lives across rural villages. Initially established as a rural development organization, empowHER India's primary focus has been the empowerment of women, guided by the firm belief that empowering women is the most effective way to uplift entire communities.

For years, empowHER India spearheaded initiatives targeting adult women, addressing their challenges and helping them reclaim their agency. However, through years of engagement, one profound realization emerged: patriarchy doesn't start in adulthood—it affects women from birth and intensifies as they grow older. The conclusion was clear: to bring about lasting change in the minds, attitudes, and behaviors of future generations, interventions must begin early.

With this insight, empowHER India shifted its focus to empowering adolescent girls. Recognizing the transformative potential of working with this younger demographic, empowHER India aims to build their confidence, independence, and life skills, ensuring they are equipped to navigate and shape their futures. The organization's interventions are designed to give these girls the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to enhance their life outcomes and break free from the constraints of patriarchal norms.



blocks

### Reach

24 Villages 4178 Adolescents Reach

2298
Parents

Gov. officials



### Program Overview

### Setu

This program aims to equip adolescents, especially girls, with the knowledge, tools, and skills to boost their confidence, strengthen their sense of agency, and build emotional resilience as they navigate the complexities of adulthood. By encouraging girls to challenge and question existing socio-cultural and gender norms, the program seeks to break the cycle of intergenerational vulnerability, empowering them to overcome challenges and stressors with confidence and purpose.

### **School WaSH**

This program ensures that students in rural government schools have access to clean, safe sanitation facilities, allowing them to relieve themselves with dignity. By providing these essential services, we help reduce dropout rates, especially for girls at the onset of puberty. Our holistic approach involves engaging parents and teachers as key stakeholders, promoting not only the construction of facilities but also fostering lasting behavior change around hygiene practices.

### Rakesh Jain Madhyamik Vidyamandir (RJMV)

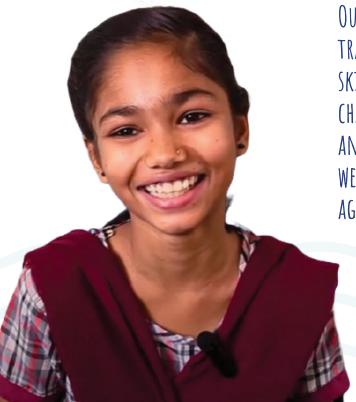
For the past 25 years, empowHER India has supported RJMV, which educates 450 students annually. What began as an effort to provide education for girls in areas lacking schools for them, has now evolved into a beacon of progress. Today, no girl in the surrounding villages is out of school. RJMV has grown to feature state-of-the-art classrooms, a library, a laboratory, and various other resources. empowHER India supports a range of extracurricular activities, ensuring a well-rounded education for all students enrolled.



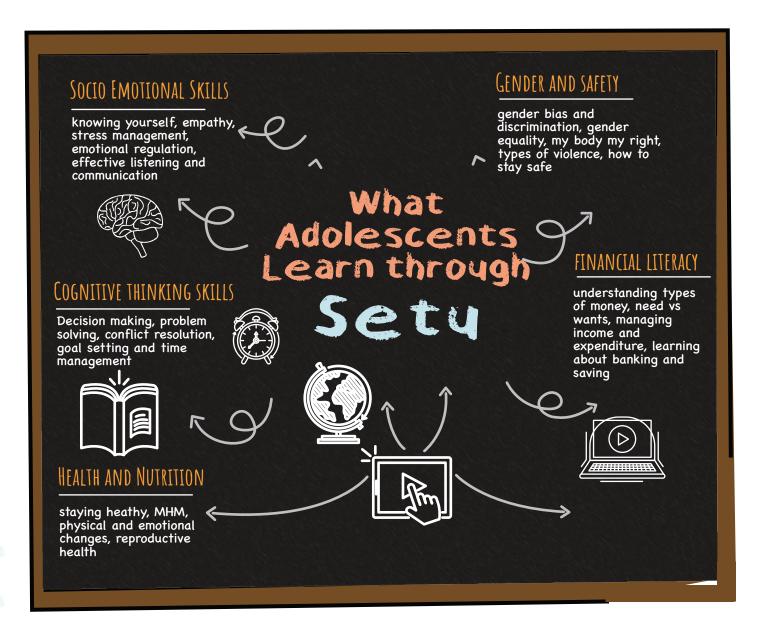
### Setu

2023-24 marked a pivotal year for Setu for two key reasons: We launched our first in-school program and expanded our footprint to new locations. This was a critical test to assess whether Setu's program design is truly scalable and adaptable across diverse settings.

Setu is a sincere effort to confront challenging societal norms. We face the harsh reality of a deeply unequal world, where women often bear the brunt of injustice. What does it take to change this? How do we create an equitable environment where girls and women can thrive on a level playing field?



OUR MISSION IS TO EXPLORE THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF LIFE SKILLS—HOW THEY CAN EMPOWER, CHANGE ATTITUDES, RESHAPE BEHAVIORS, AND ULTIMATELY ENHANCE THE WELL-BEING OF GIRLS BY BUILDING THEIR AGENCY AND RESILIENCE.





For the first time we included boys in the group sessions after expanding our program to schools. Initially, we were uncertain whether the curriculum—particularly on sensitive topics such as understanding body parts for both genders and the physical changes during adolescence—would be appropriate for mixed-gender groups. However, we were pleasantly surprised by the active participation of both boys and girls. Neither group hesitated to contribute, demonstrating a level of comfort and engagement that exceeded our expectations.

A total of 3013 adolescents were enrolled into the Setu program through the community and school-based intervention.

#### PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Empowering girls requires more than individual focus—it necessitates the involver ent of their entire ecosystem. Just as boys, who significantly influence the experiences and life outcomes of girls, are included in our efforts, parents also play a critical role in fostering empowerment. One of our core strategies is to actively engage with parents, equipping them to create supportive environments at both the household and community levels, where girls can truly thrive.



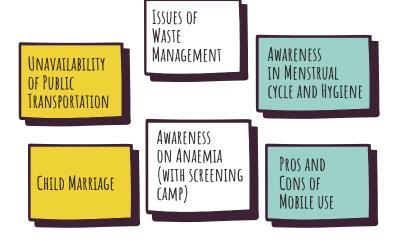


### ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES

The Setu Program has fostered close collaboration with various government functionaries, not only to provide periodic updates on program progress but also to ensure their cooperation for effective implementation. Our trainers conducted regular meetings with ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers. Sarpanches. members of Gram Panchayats, Gram Sevaks, School Management Committees, and other key stakeholders. Over the past year, more than 500 meetings were conducted at different levels to strengthen these partnerships.

### COMMUNITY ACTION BY ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Following the completion of the training modules, adolescent girls actively participated in project work and presentations to showcase how they applied the life skills and other competencies gained through the Setu Program. The girls identified key issues affecting children and adolescents in their villages, selecting themes to focus on for their projects. Some of these themes included:



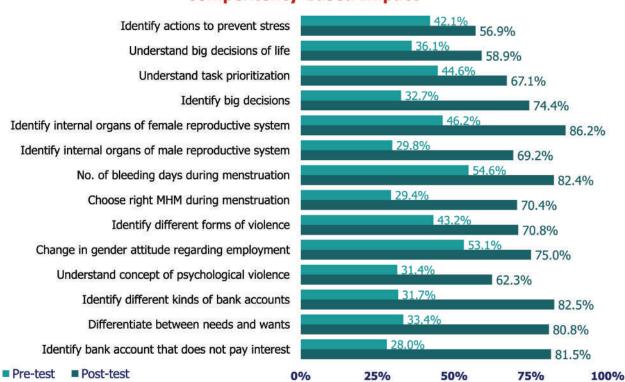
### **KEY BREAKTHROUGH**

For the first time since its inception, empowHER India is expanding into a new district through a CSR partnership. In December 2023, the Setu Program was launched in two blocks of the Sambhajinagar district (formerly Aurangabad). During the 2023-24 fiscal year, we completed the inception-phase activities, which included the identification of target blocks, intervention villages, and the selection of adolescent girls for the sessions. Moving forward, we plan to implement comprehensive field-based activities in the 2024-25 fiscal year, including Setu sessions and deeper engagement with the community and key stakeholders.

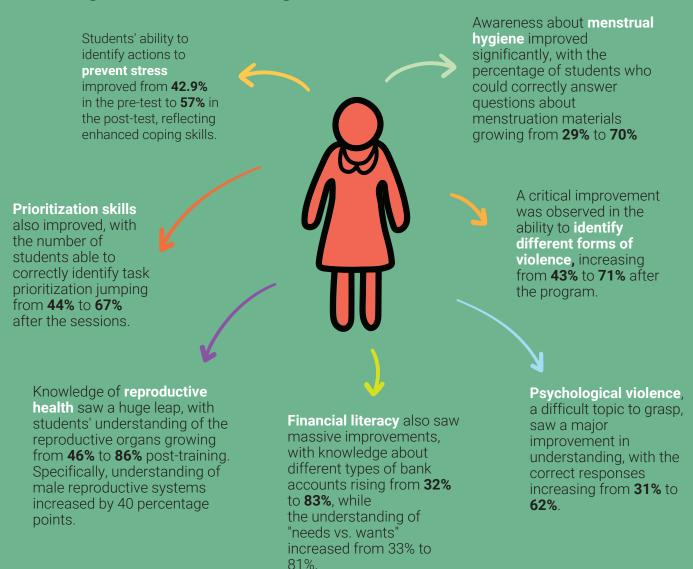




#### **Compentency-based Impact**



The Setu Program has had a significant and measurable impact on adolescents, as demonstrated by the results of the pre- and post-tests conducted to assess key areas of growth and understanding.



These results highlight the tangible progress made by the Setu Program in empowering adolescents with critical life skills, reproductive health knowledge, and financial literacy.

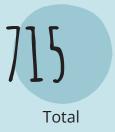
### School WaSH Program

Access to safe and hygienic sanitation is a basic human right, yet many children are denied this due to inadequate facilities in schools. Schools are foundational in shaping the future of every child, but when critical infrastructure is lacking, especially proper sanitation, it often leads to negative outcomes. This issue disproportionately affects girls, many of whom drop out due to the absence of clean and private facilities. For an organization focused on empowering girls, ensuring they remain in school is vital to their success.

VERY FEW ORGANIZATIONS ARE TRULY
DEDICATED TO THE WELL-BEING OF
COMMUNITIES, STUDENTS, AND SCHOOLS.
FOR STUDENTS TO LEAD HEALTHY LIVES, THEY
MUST LEARN AND ADOPT PROPER HYGIENE
PRACTICES—FROM WASHING THEIR HANDS
TO KEEPING THEIR SURROUNDINGS CLEAN.
EMPOWHER INDIA HAS BEEN
INSTRUMENTAL IN TEACHING THESE
ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO OUR STUDENTS.



Our School WaSH Program addresses this by providing access to high-quality sanitation facilities in schools, paired with a year-long behavior change initiative. This approach not only improves the immediate infrastructure but also fosters a culture of hygiene and sustainability within the school environment, helping girls stay in school and pursue their education without barriers.









Toilet Construction



188 toilets were constructed

In 2023-24, empowHER India successfully built two school toilets in the villages of Chai and Boregaon. The construction process emphasized timely completion, with careful planning around site identification, addressing water accessibility issues, and preparing rugged surfaces for development. Collaboration with local panchayat bodies and school management was key to smooth operations. Toilet designs were adapted based on the available space in each school, ensuring they met the required standards. Rigorous quality assurance measures were followed, including monitoring the materials and their ratios used during construction. These facilities now serve a total of 188 students—79 in Chai (37 girls, 42 boys) and 109 in Boregaon (53 girls, 56 boys)—contributing to a more hygienic and supportive learning environment.



### **Behavior Change and Communication (BCC): Student Participation**

The Behavior Change and Communication (BCC) Program is a 10-month, activity-based initiative designed to ensure students adopt proper sanitation behaviors and fundamental hygiene practices, while also promoting long-term sustainability of school sanitation infrastructure. The program uses a cascading training model, where students who exhibit leadership qualities are selected as champions. These champions are trained by our team and, in turn, lead their peers in similar activities.

By incorporating elements of gamification, the program makes learning fun and engaging. Students not only learn how to maintain clean toilets and practice proper handwashing techniques, but also gain awareness about menstruation and its management, waste segregation, and broader waste management practices. This interactive approach fosters a deeper commitment to hygiene and sanitation among the student body.

### Behaviour Change and Communication (BCC): Parent Participation

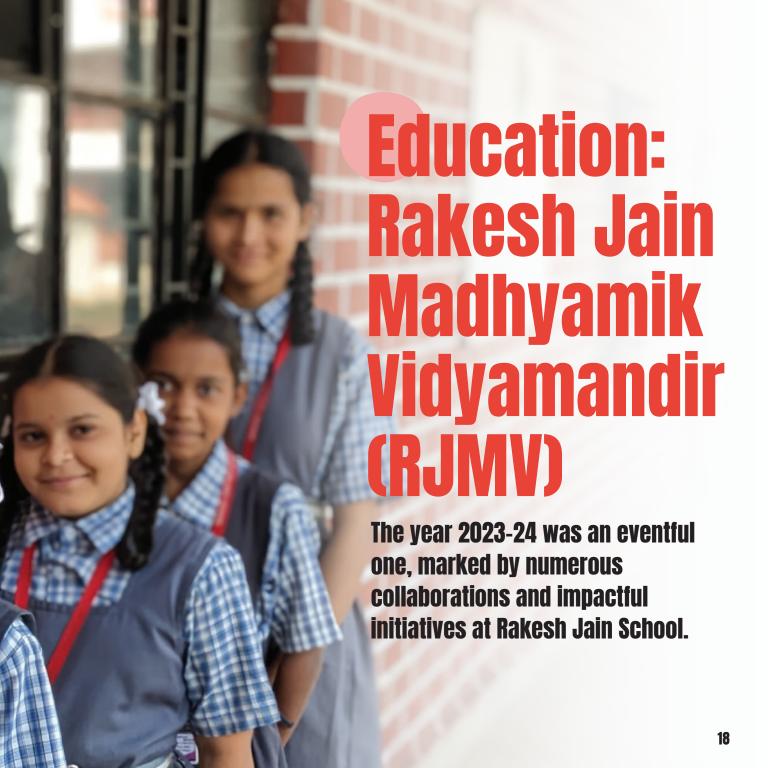
To ensure the long-term sustainability of the School WaSH Program, it was essential to involve parents as key stakeholders. The program engaged parents by forming school-level committees, encouraging them to take ownership of school-related activities and rally support from other parents. This involvement also increased teacher vigilance and accountability.

The WaSH team conducted structured workshops where parents were motivated to contribute to the school's improvement. As a result, parents led initiatives such as tree planting, building fences, creating kitchen gardens, making first aid boxes, constructing compost pits, and installing pipelines for water connectivity.









In memory of Mr. Rakesh Jain, a new school building was constructed with 8 classrooms, each accommodating 70-80 students, funded by the Urmila Jain Foundation. Tata Better Soles generously donated shoes, with 113 pairs distributed in July and 150 pairs in August.

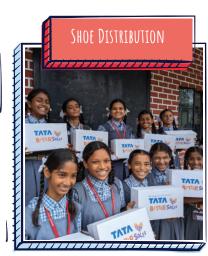
We strengthened our academic support by partnering with Vigyan Ashram, Pune, through an IBT Program set to begin in the upcoming academic year. In January, empowHER India and the Urmila Jain Foundation organized a medical health camp with R.J. Sankara Eye Hospital and Dr. Patwardhan Hospital, conducting eye tests for 460 students and staff, providing glasses to 12 students, and referring 13 for further consultation. Additionally, 209 girls and women staff underwent blood tests, followed by a blood group testing camp in February, covering 455 students and staff.

To offer enriching extracurricular experiences, 200 girls enjoyed a Women's IPL match in March, and 300 students attended a Men's IPL match (MI vs KKR) organized by the Reliance Foundation. In January, a training program on Indian Classical Dance Forms, engaged 100 students.

The school also saw infrastructure improvements, including the repair of two IBT halls and the establishment of a new science lab, supported by L&T. Additionally, empowHER India provided ongoing financial support for internet services, staff salaries, and maintenance.















### BRINGING THE JOY OF READING TO CHILDREN

In FY 2023-24, empowHER India introduced its innovative Hanging Library initiative, distributing sets to 26 schools across the Alibaug, Karjat, and Pen blocks in Raigad district. Each library set contains 162 carefully selected books aimed at fostering a love for reading among upper primary students, with books in Marathi, Hindi, and English. These include storybooks, comics, biographies, science experiments, and materials on adolescent health. The libraries will benefit 2,947 students (1,452 girls and 1,495 boys) in 22 Raigad Zilla Parishad schools, three government-aided schools, and one Ashram school.

### STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATION

POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) and CPP (Child Protection Policy) Training: Held on December 26, 2023, with 38 participants. The session, led by Ms. Ujwala Masdekar, focused on understanding the organization's responsibilities in relation to POSH and CPP policies.

POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Training: Conducted on April 5th and 6th, 2024, by Rati Foundation, this training highlighted the importance of safeguarding children from sexual harassment and initiated the creation of a comprehensive protection policy and redressal mechanism.

Inclusive Equality and Secularism Training: A two-day program led by Mr. Shrikant Laxmikant on February 3rd and 17th, 2024, aimed at reinforcing the principles of equality, inclusivity, and secularism across the organization.

These training sessions emphasized empowHER India's dedication to building internal capacities and empowering staff to enhance program impact.



### **LEADERSHIP AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

#### **FOUNDER**

Mrs Urmila Jain

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES**

Mr. Sanjiv Anand - Chairman

Mr. Utsav Kapadia

Ms. Shefali Kapadia

Mrs. Varsha Jain

Mr. Vishal Jain

#### **ADVISORY BOARD**

Mr. Sushil Kumar Jiwarajka

Mr. Paras Chowdhary

#### **CEO**

Ms. Anamara Baig

### INSTITUTIONS AND CORPORATE PARTNERS

Shri Shreyans Trust

Sevak Trust

Roop Manek Bhanshali Charitable Trust

Alkyl Amines Chemicals Limited

Overseas Polymers Pvt. Ltd.

Sykes & Ray Equities (I) Ltd.

Engichem Speciality Chemicals Pvt. Ltd.

United Way

#### **INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

Rachna Shamsi

Anandi Vangal

Sujata Kapadia

Lalan Kapadia

Rishabh Saraf

Samir Salvi

Radhika Parameswaran

Varun Vakil

Shefali Kapadia

Rahul Vohra

Vineeta Salvi

Abuzar Zakir

Sneh

Saanya Sharma

Rashida

Saif

Lotika

Jyotirmoy Chatterji

#### FRIENDS OF empowHER INDIA

Arti Vakil

Saahil,

Chaitanya

Maira

# Media and Press Highlights:

Throughout the year 2023-2024, empowHER India has remained steadfast in its commitment to championing the rights and potential of adolescent girls through diverse platforms, ranging from online news portals to digital magazines, from influential blogs to event coverage, and from thought-provoking interviews to impactful features.





May 2023- An official C20 Engagement Group of the G20 that provides a platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSO) around the world to voice the people's aspirations to the world leaders in G20.

https://www.youtube.com/live/u022oMga6KM?feature=share

September 2023 – The GoodSight Magazine Vol 5 Issue 2 https://online.fliphtml5.com/noggh/itgs/#p=75

December 2023 - Indiaspora (Blog by Anamara Baig) https://www.indiaspora.org/blog/on-a-warm-november-afternoon-empowher-blog

March 2024 - Event Coverage by Maharastra Majha (Health Check Camp in Kadav) https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=R36LDQbrkXM





### **Financials**

7.1	The Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, 1850  SCHEDULE - DX  [Vide Rule 17 (1)]  Name of the Public Trust : EMPOWHER FOUNDATION (Formerly Known As SKS CHAKSHU FOUNDATION)					on No. <u>- E - 14562</u>
	Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March, 2024  EXPENDITURE	Rs.	Rs.	INCOME	Rs.	Rs.
	To Expenditure in respect of properties : Rates, Taxes, Cesses Repairs and maintenance Salaries Insurance Deprecation (by way of provision of adjustments) Other Expenses			By Rent (accrued) (Gross TDS - Rr. 2.18,296-C, PY -2.02,950/-) (accrued) (realised) * Cn Securities  On Income Tax Refund On Bank Account	*	2,182,950.00
	To Establishment Expenses (As per Annexure "F")		4,901,747.74	i) On Fixed Deposit	*	
	To Remuneration to Trustees			ii) On S. B. A/C	110,299.00	110,299.00
	To Remuneration (in the case of a math) to the head of the math, including his household exponditure, if any  To Legal & Professional Charges  To Audit Fees  To Contribution and Fees  To Amount written off:  (in) Bed Debts (b) Loan Scholamhp (c) Innocoveriable Ranis (d) Other Items  To Security Charges (Edu)  To Depreciation  To Capital Losses on Mutual Fund Units  To Amount transferred to Reserve or Specific Funds  To Expenditure on Objects of the Trust (a) Religious (b) Educational (c) Medical Relief (d) Relief of Poverty (e) Other Cheristole Objects	1,853.00	2,145,956.00 47,200.00	By Dividend By Donations in Cash or Kind By Capital gains on Mutual Fund Units By Grants By Income from other sources By Transfer from Reserve By Deficit carried over to Balance Sheet		40,000.00 5,597,088.06 489.82 738,216.86
	To. Surplus/(Deficit) carried over to Balance Sheet  Total Ro  Im Eq. (6)  1095-107  1095-107  Author (7) Monta - 97  Author (7) Monta - 97	As per our report. FOR M.L. SHARMI FIRM REGN NO. 11 CHARTERED ACC	& CO. 6963W	*Strike off whichever is not applicable  Attribute  *Strike off whichever is not applicable  Attribute  *Strike off whichever is not applicable	For en	8,889,643,74

SCHEDULE - VIII [Vide Rule 17 (1)]

Name of the Public Trust: EMPOWHER FOUNDATION (Formerly Known As SKS CHAKSHU FOUNDATION)

Registration No. E - 145

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	Rs.	Re.	PROPERTY AND ASSETS	Rs.	Rs.
rusts Funds or Corpus :- (As Per Annexure "A")			Immovable Properties :- (At Cost)(As Fer Annexure "B")	100	ne-
Balance as per last Balance Sheet	40,535,430.00		Balance as per last Balance Sheet	24.439,517.00	
Add Donation Received during the year (as per details <u>citatched</u> )	1,650,000.00		Additions:	24/10/21/100	
	42,285,430.00		() Land of training centre		
Less: Adjustment to Income & Expenditure account	Service Control	42,295,430.00			
			W Building - School		
			Less: Sides during the year		
ther Esmarked Funds :-			Depreciation up to date		
(Crested under the provisions of the trust deed or			preparement up to use	-	24,439,517.00
scheme or out of the Income)					
Deprecision Fund					
Sinking Fund			Investments :- (As Per Annexure *C*)		
Reserve Fund			Note: The market value of the above investments		39,127,246.73
	-		is Ris. 5,53,02,722.61/-		110000000000000000000000000000000000000
Class Room Fund	None and the second				
Any other Fund (As Per Annexure "A")	28,153,395.44	28,163,395,44	Fixed Assets :- (As Per Annexure "D")		
			Balance as per last Balance Sheet	1,545,018.00	
			Additions during the year	810,948.50	
sane (Secured or Unescured) :-			Less: Sales during the year		
From Trustees					
From Others			Depreciation up to date		2,155,998.50
1348,900,000,000,000	**				
dillos >			Loans (Secured or Unsecured): Good / doubtful	100000000000000000000000000000000000000	
	1000000		Loans Scholarships (As Per Annexure * E*)	840,000.00	
For Expenses	85,954.00		Other Loans	-	840,000.00
For Micro Financing Scheme	120,000.00				
For Rent and Other Deposits	38,220.00		Advances :-		
For Others	15.677.00	239,851.00	To Trustees		
	11.5	1000	To Employees	28.531.00	
			To Contractors	1000000	
cores and Expenditure Account :-					
Balance as per last Balance Sheet	10000000		To Lawyers	7000000	
	632,294.37		To Deposits	118,900.00	
Less: Appropriation, if any	60		To Others	530,479.00	677,910.00
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Add/(Less) : Surplus/(Deficit) as per income and	(738,216.86)		Income Outstanding >		
Expendiure Account			Ront Receivables		
	(105.922.49)		Interest Receivables		
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			Cash and Bank Balances :-	20102000	
			(a) In Saving Account with	3,266,583.72	
			(b) In Fixed Deposit Account	20	2
			(c) With the Trustee		37
			(d) With the manager		3,265,583,72
					Comment of the
			Income and Expenditure Account :-		
			Balance as per Balance Sheet		
- BARALLA				7.5	
JCHARMO			Less Appropriation, if any		
7.3			Less Supplies in per Income and	10	
Francisco No.			Expenditure Account		
1/M9ETW Total R	S.,	70,572,753.95	Yotal Rs.		70,572,753.96
(1107. The Summit Repress Bar.)					TARIO MANAGEMENT
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2 4 SEP 2024	Membership No. 104982				





Empowering Women. Transforming Villages

