

# Karishma



# About Karishma

Karishma is a 12 year old student, studying in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and who joined Sandipani Muni School Vrindavan in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standard. She is the second born amongst her elder sister and younger brother. She is the first girl in the family who has managed to attend school since her elder sister never did, possibly as her parents could not afford to pay for her fees.

Her mother's name is Rekha, born 37 years ago in a poor village family in the Mathura district. She didn't attend school and grew up illiterate.. After a brief childhood spent at home with a chance not making it beyond the age of 15 due to the precarious health and sanitary conditions and if a girl survived beyond the age of 15 (and sometimes earlier) marriage would be the next step. By the age of 17 Rekha was given a way in marriage to a boy who was four years older than her and of equal social background. Once married she relocated to the house of her in laws where she stayed as a housewife and a mother: until tragedy occurred and she became a widow due to her husband dying of health complications. She she had to find work outside as a maid in a local ashram. Her salary is minimal and cannot support her family : 2000 rupees per month. Yet she has stayed at the house of her in laws despite her husband not being present.

Her father name was Bharat, born 35 years ago in local Vrindavan. Little is known of him apart from the fact that he never attended school and did not have any relevant skills that could have helped him to find decent and well paid work. He was supporting his family as a deity cloth maker and seller but his health affected him to the extent that by the age of 35 due to a kidney infection he died, living behind his family to fend for themselves.

The family lives in the house of Karishma's relatives (from the father side).They occupy one of the rooms which has electricity , a bed and floor mats. They have access to a toilet, tap water and a gas cooker but no kitchen space available. The mother is struggling to maintain all children but luckily they have some basic support from their relatives. They could do with some extra support in the form of food ration on a monthly basis.

# Rashi



# About Rashi

Rashi is a 7 years old girl who attends the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class and who joined Sandipani Muni School in the prep Class. She is an only child and she lives with her mother and grandparents. Just looking at her latest progress report based on last term's exams, she seems to be inclined towards subjects such as Math and Hindi. Hopefully she will be able to continue to attend school and complete her studies despite the issues at home.

Her mother's name is Chandar, born 30 years ago in a village some 7 km. out of Vrindavan. Her parents never sent her to school and married her at an early age of 12 but she did not go and live with her husband and in laws until the age of 17. Once she did she entered her role as a housewife despite the many issues she had to face: her husband was very abusive and things got so bad that she had to take herself and her daughter away from such abusive environment. She has gone back to her parents home and she had to find a job as a construction labourer in order to contribute to her family maintenance. She earns approximately 2500 rupees per month but it is a paltry sum compared to the amount of work she has to perform.

Her father name is Praveen , born 37 years ago in a village on the other side of the Yamuna river opposite the town of Vrindavan. He did not attend school or acquired any particular skills therefore he grew up illiterate and had to struggle to find decent work to maintain his family. He is a farm labourer and he earns approximately 5000 rupees per month. His character was not good, he had a drinking problem and he often quarreled with his wife. After years of being on the receiving end of such treatment from him, his wife decided to live him and his parents as there were no signs of change from him.

Rashi and her mother live at the grandparents home, a simple village facility with electricity, a toilet, a hand pump for water , a mud stove for cooking their meals instead of a gas cooker and a home made bed. The mother is struggling to maintain herself and her daughter, her parents are old and need support too, unfortunately her income cannot guarantee the stability required for a family to fully function.

# Sanjana



# About Sanjana

Sanjana is a 8 years old student who joined SMS Vrindavan in the prep grade and who currently attends the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standard. She is the youngest born in the family and has an elder brother and sister. She's a fairly good student whose favorite subjects are english and math. Her parents are putting a lot of hope in her that she will continue with her studies and hopefully escape the cycle of poverty they have known due to their limited education, and one day be able to have a better life.

Her mother's name is Seema, born 34 years ago in local Vrindavan. She only attended school up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standard and did not progress further since she could not concentrate properly in her studies. She remained at home until the age of 17 when her parents decided to get her married to a boy three years older than her of similar social background. Once married her activities have always been conducted at home, performing the duties of a housewife.

Her father name is Subash, born 37 years ago in the state of West Bengal. He attended school up to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade standard and completed his elementary education but did not progress further as he was not suited for studying. Married at the age of 20 he started working as a seller and maker of deity clothes, an activity which is mostly widespread in Vrindavan being a city of temples and of a higher religious connotation. He can earn up to 6000 rupees per month depending on activity and work required.

The family rents a space at 2500 rupees per month. The room they live has electricity, tap water and a toilet attached next to the room. No kitchen space is available so the family uses a gas cooker within the room they live in. The family seems to be grounded and without issues such as health ones, despite the fact that financial restrictions are a regular occurrence and has caused the family to live well below an acceptable standard.

# Dolly



# About Dolly

Dolly is a 7 years old student currently attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standard and who joined SMS Vrindavan in the prep class. She is the first born in the family comprising of a younger sister and a 4 months old brother. She has been described by her teacher as a very enthusiastic student with a good attendance record and who return her homework always on time. Her strong subjects seems to be in English and Math. The parents are hoping that she will be able to continue her studies as diligently as she is now, and hopefully one day she will be able to complete her education.

Her mother's name is Yashoda, born 28 years ago in the neighboring state of Haryana. She was born in a poor family that did not view school education as a necessity. By the age of 18, after an uneventful childhood and youth, although illiterate and inexperienced in regards to the ways of life, her parents found for her a suitable husband, four years older than her and of equal social standing and lack of education. She relocated to the house of her in laws where she started her own family and where she is conducting the activities of a housewife, looking after the needs of her in laws and her immediate family members.

Her father name is Mukesh, born 32 years ago in local Vrindavan. He did not receive school education although he did attend the initial stages of schooling but he did not show any interest in studying and therefore his parents removed him from school and did not encourage him further. While in his youth he did not obtain any particular skills that could have helped him to find decent work. Once married he started working as a street cart seller of fruits, a competitive activity due to the large number of sellers in the various areas of Vrindavan. He is able to earn up to 4000 rupees per month, depending on activity.

The family lives in a joint family setting. They occupy one of the rooms in the house of their relatives, the room itself has electricity, a home made bed and a few items of furniture. They have access to a toilet and a hand pump to fetch water. There is no kitchen or a gas cooker, the family cook their meals on a mud stove fueled by wood or cow dung. The family is dealing with financial issues on a a regular basis.



# Mona



# About Mona

Mona is a 7 years old student who currently attends the 1<sup>st</sup> grade standard and who joined SMS Vrindavan in the prep class in 2016. She is the 2<sup>nd</sup> born in the family and has an older sister who is studying in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade standard in the same school. She is very good at studies and has scored 80% in Hindi and well above 80% English. Of course, she is studying at an early stage but such results are rare for a girl her age. Her parents are hoping that she will continue at this stage and that one day be able to finish her studies.

Her mother's name is Reena, born 30 years ago in a village within the Mathura area. She came from a family who struggled to make ends meet and that did not believe in the idea that daughters should be educated. She grew up illiterate and kept at home until she turned 17: a suitable husband was found by her parents, two years older than her and of equal social standing. She relocated to Vrindavan to the house of her in laws where she settled with her family and where her activities as a housewife have been conducted ever since.

Her father name is Vishnu, born 32 years ago in local Vrindavan. He attended school for a brief period of time but he did not even complete his first year as he did not show any interest in his studies. Once married he started a home business as a washerman and dry cleaner: he has several customers who benefit from his services. His salary is approximately 6000 rupees per month.

The family lives in the house of Mona's grandparents, they occupy one of the rooms and have access to a toilet, a hand pump to fetch water, a gas stove for cooking and a mud stove as a substitute when the gas runs out. The room they live in has electricity and a bed. The only issue in the family is the financial restrictions they face on a monthly basis, due to the limited funds they have to rely upon.

# Kiran



# About Kiran

Kiran is a nine years old student who joined SMS Vrindavan in the prep class and who currently studies in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standard. She has an elder sister by one year who also studies in the same school, one class above her, and two younger brothers. Both her school attendance and performance have been phenomenal : over 80% in Hindi and Math , 66% in English. Hopefully her mother will recognise this fact and allow her to continue her studies despite the fact that Kiran's father has died 6 months ago and the mother seems to be struggling with maintaining the family.

Her mother's name is Ragwati, born 34 years ago in the neighboring state of Haryana. She was never sent to school as her parents did not understand the importance of educating their daughters and they did not deem it a necessity. Rather, they kept their daughters at home as support to the mother regarding home duties. She had a very uneventful childhood and she grew up illiterate as a result. By the time she turned 18. her parents decided to arrange for her marriage and found her a suitable candidate for a husband. He was equal in age, of similar social background with basic education. She relocated to Vrindavan at the house of her in laws where she was performing the activities of a housewife until six months ago when her husband passed away due to a long battle with a spinal infection. She had to find a job in order to maintain her family and she found work locally as a cleaner, earning approximately 3000 rupees per month. She has the support of her extended family despite the financial limitations due to her limited salary.

Little is known about her father Bhagwati who died at the age of 33. He went to school up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade standard and once married he worked as a labourer in order to maintain his family.

Kiran and her family lives in the home of their father relatives. It's a basic facility with electricity, tap and well water, a mud stove to cook their meals but no kitchen space or gas cooker available . They have a home made bed which they all share but no toilet hence when the need arises each family member has to use the outdoor space. The family are trying to remain stable despite the major loss of the father.