



# *Dream Weavers!*

[www.anoothi.org](http://www.anoothi.org)

*Volume I, January, 2012*

## *Warm Greetings for the year 2012 from Anoothi Women!*

*“We have had a great year 2011. Our having associated with economic empowerment programs run by Anoothi and Vatsalya has changed our lives in many beautiful ways. We feel strong and have a new mission in life”.*

Sultana, the leader of the Self-Help Group from Ajmer, has asked me to tell you **ESPECIALLY** about how happy and grateful they are for the way their lives have changed!

The Anoothi women from Ajmer Raliya project have also asked me to tell our dear friend in Anchal, who has not been too well:

*“We pray for your health and fast recovery. We pray for your long life. You are a wonderful person, who has brought sunshine into our lives; who has given such great new hopes and dreams to our children. May God grant you a hundred years of healthy and happy life!”*

That’s the ultimate Indian blessing - Live 100 years!

In spite of some unexpected and some planned developments around their lives this year, our dear Colleen and Devon of Anchal ([www.anchalproject.org](http://www.anchalproject.org)) have achieved some great targets for Anoothi women. Anchal alone provided them sustenance of Rs. 563,755 (**US\$12,527**). About 70% of this amount was directly paid to women participating in Raliya making. (Raliya is a blanket made of six layers of old cotton Sarees held together by Katha stitch which is straight parallel sewing manually done with needle and colored threads) The

outcome: Seventeen women, formerly working as CSWs, are able to move to a life of dignity and economic freedom, thanks to this unique Anchal initiative!

It is not only the earning that makes the women happy: Anchal also has some most extraordinary ways of conducting the trainings for these women. Their participation in creating new designs is what really excites them. Here is an example of how Colleen and Devon involve the women in creating new designs of Raliya.

### *Process of creation of a design for Raliya by Anchal*

Step 1: The women take a walk in the neighborhood and choose a site, a location they find attractive and take a picture of it.



Step 2: Anchal team creates a computer graphic design of it...

Step 3: Anoothi women make a Raliya!



It was unimaginable for these women that working and learning could be such FUN! They come up with very interesting and unusual design-ideas now and feel very delighted when they see how a routine and almost unnoticeable thing can turn into a work of art!

## *Knowing what it all means to them...*

We spend a lot of time with our SHG women just conversing informally over a cup of tea during break hours or even when they are working tirelessly with needles in their hands and their heads bowed down for hours, eyes focused on the sewing. These conversations reveal some simple yet amazing facts of their lives. We derive our strength from their courage. Here is what they say:

*“.....The Raliya project has given us unity, dignity and companionship. The loneliness of struggling alone has changed into a collective challenge to bring positive change in our lives. We support each other in it.*

*It is changing our lives and the way we look at ourselves.*

*Rs. 2500 (\$50) is a HUGE sum! We do a lot with it.*

*We no longer are helpless dependants. We feel we can manage and solve any problem and look a problem straight in the eyes. The problem has to bow down, not us.*

*We do not need to borrow money on high interest rates any more from Baniya (local money lenders) It is such a relief that every month there is a sure income.*

*Whenever a desperate situation arises, we take money from our friends in Vatsalya. They are our family now. They are nice people and protect us from exploitation.*

*Paying the school fees of our children is no longer a problem now.*

*There is such a relief to be associated with an organization. We feel strong, emotionally, psychologically and morally. It is not so easy now for someone to exploit us and force us against our will.*

*Many women have stopped drinking, smoking and the use of other intoxicants after joining this project. They don't feel the depression any more that used to drive them to alcohol etc. Now they feel enthusiastic and get up every morning with a new hope.*

*We now dress well and decently.*

*I use my strength now to change the lives of other oppressed women. Once I was like that myself but not anymore...”*

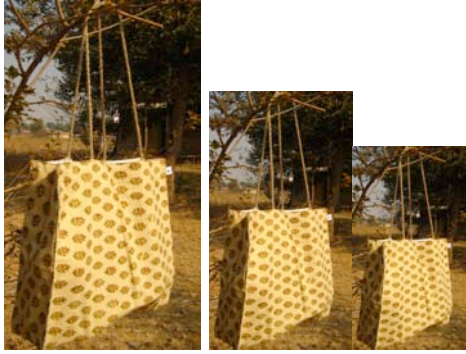


Please visit the Anchal website [www.anchalproject.org](http://www.anchalproject.org) to learn more about their wonderful work with the women of India. Their special focus is on the rehabilitation of women employed in the sex trade and on providing them with an alternative means of livelihood.

### *Anoothi creations this quarter*



These Patwa jewellery items are being exhibited and sold in Mother Earth stores in Bangalore and Mumbai.



Beach Bag made of cotton, jute and handmade jute string

## *Our NEW buyer this quarter*

Caroline Poiner, Director of PDC Creative Private Limited, Sydney, showed us a bag and asked if our women could make it. These are very appropriate to be used as Beach Bags. Also, Daisy Poiner wanted to sell some bracelets in her school fair. Both the orders were delivered to them and I have this feedback from Caroline:

*“We love the bracelets, the ones with the black string!! The bags also look great, we will endeavour to sell them in the new year. I think the quality looks excellent so I'm hopeful this will all work well for us”*

## *Upcoming Event*

**Angela Lensch**, a jewelry artist from Door County, WI, USA will be visiting us in February to work with Anoothi women. She has some great ideas about making jewelry from different types of beads. It will add yet another unique product to Anoothi collections, meaning more livelihood options for Anoothi women!

We will be back with the next edition of this quarterly newsletter. Meanwhile we will look forward to your feedback and if you have any questions, please do write to us.

Please visit our new website [www.vatsalva.org](http://www.vatsalva.org) for more on our Women's Empowerment Project.

*Thank you...☺*

*Jaimala*

Edited by: Patricia Little, Ireland