



GOONJ.. a voice, an effort

Background Press Note

The Problem: Clothing is one of the three basic needs out of **Food, cloth & shelter**, but it doesn't find mention in the list of development subjects which has more than 100 issues; from domestic violence to global warming. Why do we think of clothes during disasters only? Why do we treat Cloth as mere charitable object, to donate!! In winters thousands suffer due to lack of proper clothing. In some parts of the county people put their kids to sleep in a pit dug in the ground. Why women's universal need of a piece of cloth as sanitary pad is not an issue, forcing millions to use sand, ash, jute bags, husk, newspaper instead. Countless women face 5 to 7 days of indignity and massive health risk during menses in the absence of spare clean cloth. Donating clothes is the oldest form of charity; an activity that has been happening at an individual or sporadic level in every part of the world. On the other hand there are vast quantities of discarded cloth and other material considered a waste and a burden in the cities.

GOONJ's idea & process: Goonj is a nationwide movement started 18 years ago by Anshu Gupta and his friends to address the most basic but ignored need of clothing and the multifaceted role it plays in village India. Goonj understands the connect between the struggle for the basics of life for the poor and village India getting left behind in the entire development happening in urban India. Using vast quantities of untapped underutilized material lying in urban homes as a powerful resource, Goonj is trying to address both these critical issues simultaneously without burdening either the giver or the receiver in the process. While Goonj matches the material with the specific needs of local village communities; going into minute details of climate, age & gender profile, social cultural norms etc, the actual distribution is tied in with the community working on specific development gap areas (in its own area) identified by the community itself (under **Cloth for Work** initiative). These gap areas are different at different places; communities have built bamboo bridges, dug up wells, repaired roads, cleaned up villages etc. and received material. The common thread is the material as motivation for nudging the communities to take action against their own problems. This act of working for their own community, not only brings a sense of pride and dignity in receiving the material but more importantly it brings a huge sense of ownership and empowerment for the village communities. Since Goonj focuses on the most far flung, backward and neglected areas of the country; at an intrinsic level, as we reach clothes & other material to these people, this frees up their very meager resources for more urgent needs like food, health etc..

Impact: Goonj is channelising the city's surplus to village India as an invaluable resource for much needed development work. The impact is visible in both; cities and villages. In villages, it is addressing many basic needs like woolens for winters, school dress for children while in the cities; it is providing a constructive channel to the growing quantities of waste from urban households. Similarly, Goonj is not only providing clean cloth sanitary napkins to village women but more importantly it is motivating them to shed the massive social and cultural taboos around menses and talk about the hardships, the indignity and huge health risks they face in those seven days. It is providing the critical nudge for urban & rural communities to get personally involved in addressing social issues. Every year Goonj undertakes, together with the village communities, more than 2000 activities of rural development work.

Innovation: Goonj's work impacts everyone it touches; the giver, the receiver and all other stakeholders in between. The village communities are being vitalized, as their standards of living are improving with material inputs. A big segment of rural women have better awareness about their reproductive health due to knowledge about better health and hygienic practices. Other sectors touched by the development activities; like education, environment, infrastructure building, are also having their own multiplier effects.

Right now Goonj has its own offices and voluntary set ups in 12 cities and is dealing with roughly 3000 tons of material annually, working across parts of more than 22 states of India.

GOONJ's nationwide initiatives

Cloth For Work

Cloth is a synonym of dignity. Goonj and its grassroots partner groups involve the local villagers in addressing their own neglected development issues; they get Family Kits having a whole lot of material for an entire family's needs in turn; as a motivation and not as a charity. In remote villages of Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand & many other states; roads have been repaired, wells have been dug up, school boundary walls built & cleanliness/plantation drives initiated without any financial transaction.

School to School!

School to School (S2S) supports resource starved rural and slum schools by sensitizing urban students & their parents about the needs of their less fortunate counterparts; Material like old books, uniforms, shoes, school bags, etc. are channelised to thousands of village children, motivating them towards learning. PRATIBIMB, our annual interface event brings together children from across the country, building a better empathy and understanding about each other's life. For more, refer goonj.org/p=22280/.



Countless women in villages use dirty, useless cloth during 5 days of menses, leading to many infections and diseases. A woman used a piece of blouse and died of tetanus due to the hook inside. Goonj is providing clean cloth napkins to rural/slum women and is actively campaigning in rural & urban India to generate awareness on this taboo issue. Goonj has launched a global campaign – **NJPC A Million Voices** to break the shame and silence around this issue. You can log on to goonj.org/njpc to add your voice to this campaign.



Known for its need-based and systematic relief work, Goonj has been active in relief operations during all the major disasters since the Chamoli earthquake in 1999. The emphasis is on the most neglected disasters like people dying of cold in winters & annual floods across India. Goonj emerged as one of the biggest relief agencies in the past few disasters. We now have extensive ongoing programmes focusing on employment, education & basic needs in these areas. For more, refer goonj.org/p=22276/.



It's a brand built around reusing and up-cycling even the last shreds of material that Goonj receives. A range of over 100 different products like purse, fancy bags, file folder, mats etc. made out of torn jeans, obsolete audio tapes, one side used paper etc. shows the ingenuity, craftsmanship and design aesthetics of women from nearby slums involved in making these products. Buying a '**Green by Goonj**' products ensures that our work in rural India continues unhindered irrespective of large/small funding support. For more, refer goonj.org/p=23336/.

Recognitions

- **July 15;** 2015 Ramon Magsaysay award to Anshu Gupta
- **Nov' 14:** Goonj won the **Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award**
- **August' 14:** Asia's leading English magazine 'The Top 10 of Asia' featured **Mr. Anshu Gupta, Founder Goonj among Asia's top 10 social entrepreneurs.**
- **July' 14:** Goonj is one amongst '**The Purpose Economy 100 Asia**' list.
- **July' 14:** Goonj chosen among **100 leading Global Green Innovations** of The prestigious think tank SUSTAINIA
- **Feb'14:** GOONJ gets a place among "**The World's Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in India**", in a listing by
- **Nov' 12:'Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award'** to Anshu Gupta, Founder GOONJ, by Schwab Foundation
- **July'12:** GOONJ chosen as '**Game Changing Innovation**' by NASA and US State Dept.
- **June'12:** **GDN Japanese Award** for 'Most Innovative Development Project'
- **Feb'12:** GOONJ won '**Edelgive**' award in health & well- being category.
- **Nov'10:** Anshu Gupta listed in international '**Forbes**' magazine as one of **India's most powerful rural entrepreneurs.**
- **May'10:** '**Innovation for India**' award by Marico for developing innovative solution by using old cloth and other material.
- **Mar' 10:** GOONJ won **Jamnalal Bajaj CFBP Award** for 'Fair Practices'
- **Nov' 09:** '**Cloth for Work**' wins international **Lien i3 Challenge Award**
- **June'09:** **Not just a piece of cloth** wins GOONJ's third **Changemaker's Innovation Award**
- **Mar' 09:** CNN IBN's '**Real Heros**' award to **Anshu Gupta** in women welfare segment.
- **Mar' 08:** GOONJ won **India NGO of the year award** in a nationwide search & selection by Resource Alliance.
- **May' 07:** GOONJ's sanitary napkin project '**Not just a piece of cloth**' wins **World Bank's Global Development Market Place Award.**
- **Jul' 07:** Vastra Samman recognized as one of '**The Good Practices**' by **Dubai International Awards.**
- **2006:** Won the prestigious **Changemakers Innovation Award**, the second time, for **RAHAT**, our disaster relief initiative
- **2004:** **Prestigious Ashoka Fellowship** to Anshu Gupta, for his innovative idea & its mass social impact.
- **2004:** GOONJ won **Changemakers Innovation Award** for its **School to School** initiative.

Key Facts and Figures about Goonj..

1. Started in 1998 in Delhi by Anshu Gupta, Meenakshi Gupta, with a few friends.
2. 12 offices across India.
3. Channelising more than 3000 tons of material every year.
4. Goonj initiates more than 2000 rural development activities with its '**Cloth for Work**' programme every year.
5. Goonj has a team of around 200+ people and thousands of volunteers across India.
6. Goonj reaches out to parts of 22 states of India through a grassroots partner base of more than 250 organizations.
7. **Over 3.0 million sanitary pads** produced out of waste cloth & reached to villages/slums as a viable solution & powerful tool to open up taboo subject of menses under its initiative-“ Not Just a piece of Cloth”
8. **Over 250 tons** of throw away waste cloth converted into traditional mattress/quilt (Sujni) as large scale income generation activity in villages.

Connect with Team Goonj.. T: 011-41401216, 26973251

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We are looking for 5000 people to join GOONJ's [Team 5000](#)