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**SUDHARSHAN – A BEAUTIFUL LIFE IN THE MAKING**

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## All it takes is a little Love!

*At Sri Arunodayam, each child has a story to tell, and this is Sudharshan's.*

*Abandoned by his parents in 2014, Sudharshan was found on the streets of Trichy, a metropolitan city in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. He was only 9 months old at the time.*

### **Sudharshan's uniqueness**    **Taking up the challenge**

Sudharshan was rescued by ChildLine volunteers who contacted several organizations, but none would accept him. He finally came to Sri Arunodayam in great need of medical care. A psychological evaluation revealed that he lived with intellectual disability. But Sudharshan also has a unique problem. He is a hermaphrodite – more commonly known as an intersex person, because he has both male and female genitalia. This condition occurs approximately once in every 4,500 births where a baby seems to have a mixture of both female and male parts.

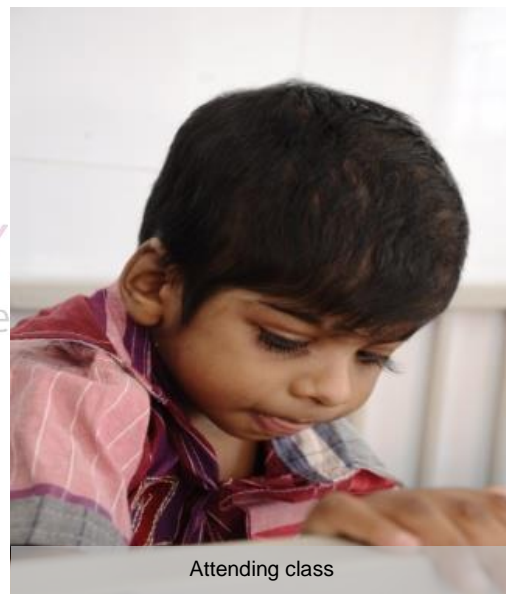
The causes of ambiguous genitalia include genetic variations, and hormonal imbalances and malformations of the fetal tissues that are supposed to evolve into genitals.

To be honest, we were perplexed because we had never faced a challenge of this kind. But after consulting some of the best medical minds in the city, we learnt to deal with the situation and Sudharshan has happily settled in with his caregivers.

Sudharshan was completely immobile at the time of admission. He was bedridden for a good while but we slowly coaxed him into an early intervention program which involved regular physiotherapy, special education and sensory integration exercises. Today, Sudharshan can walk with assistance and loves doing his exercises. We are particularly thrilled because he is beginning to communicate – although, in monosyllables. He mingles with the other children and his progress is very promising.

Sudharshan is one of 110 children at Sri Arunodayam where 16% are mildly challenged, 23% are moderately challenged, 38% are severely challenged, 19% are profoundly challenged, 2% are spastic, and 2% are visually challenged.

*Sri Arunodayam is a secular organization with zero tolerance for discrimination against children, whether on the basis of religion, caste, status, or gender orientation.*



Attending class



Walking with his physiotherapist