



**SRI ARUNODAYAM**  
Home for Mentally Challenged Destitute

## Akshaya's Indestructible Spirit!

*This child is a ward of the Government of India and her identity is recognised and protected.  
Using her picture or story without permission from Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust is a punishable offence.*

Akshaya is a sweet 15 year old whom we are blessed to call our own. Akshaya means 'indestructible' and if ever there was a child that lived up to its name, it would be Akshaya! Watching her bloom over the years, we can testify to this truly indestructible spirit she carries within her.

If you should meet Akshaya today, you'll find her to be a soft-spoken, well-mannered girl, always smiling and radiating a joyful spirit. You'd think she had a happy childhood albeit some learning difficulties, but Akshaya's story is just as traumatic as the other children's. She was abandoned when a month old, at a home in Madurai on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2003. Apparently, her parents were too poor to afford her treatment. She was ADL (Activities of Daily Living) dependent then. Akshaya came to us when she was 7 years old as she is moderately intellectually disabled with cerebral palsy, and has a speech disorder. Despite working on her speech, Akshaya still finds it difficult to speak coherently. She draws and stutters but somehow manages to get her message across to you.

Just like the others, Akshaya was put through a rehabilitation program that involved a nutritious diet, medical treatment, physiotherapy, early intervention special education, play, and subsequently, occupational therapy. Akshaya can read small words and write quite legibly. Her vocabulary is good, but she still needs physiotherapy to correct her gait. She can write and recite our home's address. This is something we teach all children in event that they should find themselves lost. With consistent therapy, Akshaya has been able to participate in various Sports Meets for the differently abled and attend several cultural programs on our behalf.

Being a young girl, we are grooming Akshaya in vocational projects. She weaves colorful wire baskets and is attending Tailoring classes. We see tremendous potential in Akshaya. Now independent in ADL she acts like a little mother at the home, taking care of the children by feeding, washing and grooming them so meticulously that she is indispensable to our care givers. Akshaya is also great at housekeeping. She loves to sweep, swab and keep the home clean. She even washes her own clothes! Whatever she does, she does to perfection and far surpasses her role as caregiver (which she assumed entirely on her own!). It would come as no surprise if she were to become a Vocational Trainer at Sri Arunodayam one day.



From a life of total dependence 7 years ago to one of complete independence today, Akshaya has more than proved that she has an indestructible spirit indeed!

*Report prepared by Althea D'Sylva for Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust.*