

**Navjyothi Children's Home: Sisters Adorers project to Educate and nurtur children to combat child labour and create a brighter future.)**

**The work of the Adorers in India to educate and nurture protect children from child labour: Navjyothi Children's Home**

The Sisters Adorers, Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament and of charity has projects such as **Navjyothi Children's Home in Mumbai**, India, are trying to be "a drop in the ocean" to eradicate child labour.

The International Day Against Child Labour is celebrated on 12 June every year. This day aims to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the actions and efforts needed to eliminate it.

Child labour deprives children of their childhood, their bright potential and their human dignity. It also hinders their physical and mental development. There are several reasons why poverty plays a huge role in depriving children of access to freedom and the enjoyment of all their basic rights. Due to severe economic problems in the family, thousands of children are forced to work in inhumane conditions around the world. Poverty ends up by leading the child into the evil of child labour.

Below, on this International Day Against Child Labour 2023, we share Sister Maxina's real-life testimony from Mumbai:

Children are our tomorrow. Children make the world a beautiful place. They are talented and gifted. Children have the right to live their lives freely, the right to express, to play and to explore freely. They should have many opportunities to learn and grow. Every child constitutionally has the Right to Education. The Indian Constitution, 86th Amendment- Act 2002, Article 21 -A states: "To provide free and compulsory education

of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 as the state may by law determine".

Well, as we look around today, it questions me; are these rights so expensive that poor kids can't afford it? The Right to express, Right to have a family, Right to Education, Right to Play etc. Why? Could poverty be the main cause?

There are a number of reasons why poverty plays an enormous role in depriving children of access to freedom and enjoyment of all their basic rights. Due severe financial issues in the family thousands of children are forced to work in inhuman conditions in the world. Poverty eventually leads the child to the evil of child labour. So, child labour forcefully robs the children of their childhood, bright potentials and human dignity. It also impedes the physical and mental development of a child.

In India under the Juvenile Justice Act, there is a Juvenile Justice Board, also known as JJ Board, which serves the needs of juveniles. There is also Child Welfare Committee (CWC) which works to support children who are in conflict with the State Law (criminal in nature) and Children who need care and protection.

As a Sister Adorer working with poor and abandoned children has brought a lot of awareness about the state of children in my country. Sisters Adorers support women and kids, particularly those who need care and security. The sheltered initiative known as Navjyothi Children's Home in Mumbai, India, provides care for children, especially those who are in hazardous situations. Especially those whose mothers are trafficked and compelled to perform commercial sex labour.

We have learned that living in such situations has a negative impact on children growth, mostly adversely impacting their education and quality of life which affects their future. In addition, because many mothers, especially those who are single, give birth to their children illegally, they are often neglected

and horrendously land-up on the streets, where they are vulnerable to evil things and criminally forced in to child labour for survival.

Sisters Adorers can proudly say we shelter these kids and provide legal, parental and most of all maternal care to these kids. Children are protected in our center so that they can get a safe environment that will prevent them from working as children. Therefore, allowing them to enjoy their childhood, study, develop and educate in order to mould a bright future themselves.

Children are given a variety of opportunities to investigate and discover their hidden talents, which aids in recognizing their capacities and abilities. Education plays an important role in lowering child labour levels in a demographic situation. Therefore, these children are enrolled in school, so that they receive quality education and variety of skill training in the hopes of one day becoming independent and self-sufficient. This helps them to realise their value and dignity.

There are numerous kids who have received care and have built bright futures in Navjyothi Children's Home. I'd like to provide a current example. The girl, Isha (name changed), who resided with her maternal aunt was not sent to school but rather asked to perform household duties and was involved in domestic work at a very young age when she should have been in school.

Her maternal aunt was sad to see her and wanted to help her out of this pitiful condition but was unable to do so due to pressure from her in-laws. However, with the assistance of some people, she learned about our project *Navjyothi Children's Home* and subsequently got admitted to the centre.

Sisters helped her enroll to a good school, and because she was a bright student and older than the required age she was quickly promoted to higher classes. This allowed her to finish her higher education, pursue a diploma in education, and land a good job

as a primary teacher. She recently married to a well-educated man, and she is now working and leading a respectable life. She is extremely appreciative of the sisters.

The work which is carried out by Sisters Adorers is a just a drop in the ocean. The rate of child labour can be decreased if everyone who reads this article does their part to guarantee that all children receive an education and are not denied their rights.

Sr. Maxina Malu

Mumbai