

Child Labour still prevalent

India continues to be home to the largest number of working children in the world even after 25 years of the enactment of a child labour prohibition act. In India, more than 28 million children have jobs, according to UNICEF estimates. Little is being done to tackle the root causes of such rampant child labour, a massive unorganized sector functioning with little or no regulation, and a lack of awareness among parents about the long term benefits of keeping a child off the workforce.

Poverty and lack of social security are the main causes of child labour. The increasing gap between the rich and the poor, privatization of basic services and liberal economic policies are causes of major sections of the population out of employment. The adversity affects children more than any other group. Lack of quality universal education also contributed to children dropping out of school and entering the labour force. A growing phenomenon is using children as domestic workers in urban areas. Children are used in dhabas, tea stalls and restaurants.

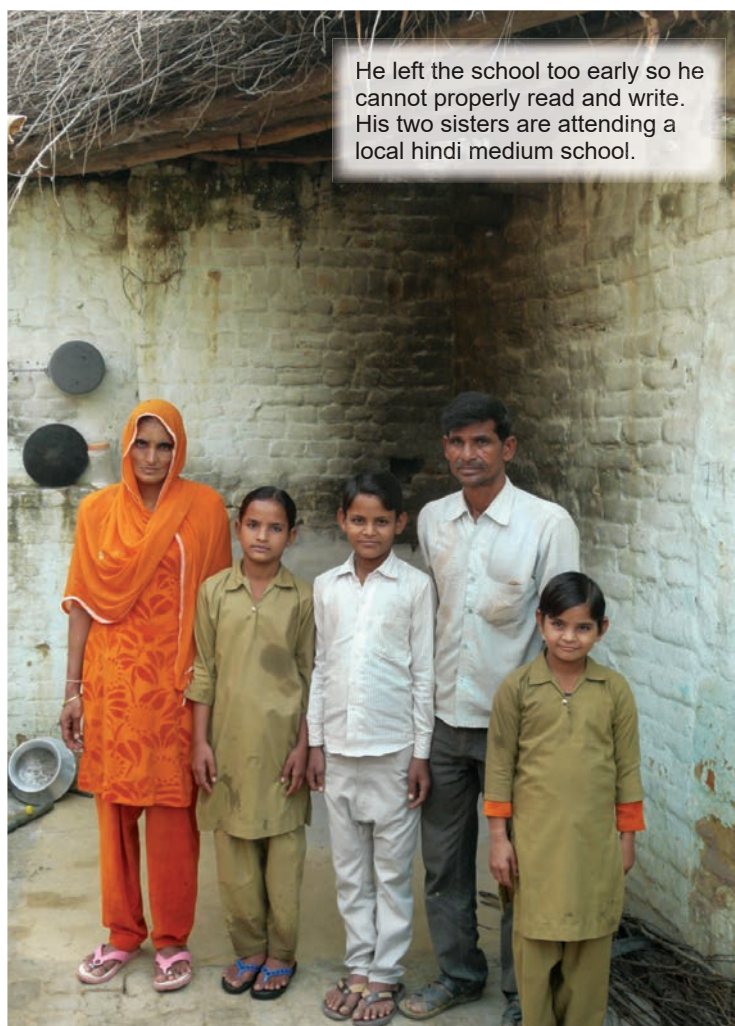
The conditions in which children work is completely unregulated and they are often made to work without food, and with very low wages, resembling situations of slavery. There are cases of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of child domestic workers.

In rural and impoverished parts of developing and undeveloped parts of the world, children have no real and meaningful alternative. Schools and teachers are unavailable. Child labour is the unnatural result. They do not get the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and psychologically. Most of the families have an average of 5 to 6 children. It is difficult for the father to earn a living and meet both ends. Children in their early teenage set out in search of labour and try to support the family. Girls stay at home helping in the household works.

In our project areas, we work to reduce child labour and integrate children in the local public schools. The micro-financing through *Self Help Groups* has helped many women to



Chaman is learning to make boxes with a shopkeeper from the locality.



He left the school too early so he cannot properly read and write. His two sisters are attending a local hindi medium school.

get an additional income so that they can send their children to school. However, there are exceptional cases where families are much in need. In such cases, we are proposing to them to try to teach their children to read and write and learn basic mathematics.

Chaman and his family is an example of how the children are forced into labour in their early childhood. He is from one of the villages where we have been working for community development. His family consists of his parents and his three sisters and two brothers. He is the 4th child. His oldest sister is married and his two older brothers, 14 & 16 years old are working in the city of *Delhi*, 300 km away from their village, and earn approximately 70 euros per month. They have not finished their primary school studies. *Chaman* also, is a drop out from school, he can hardly read and write. He wants to become an expert in making boxes so that he can go to near by cities and make a living with this skill. He is learning this work with a shopkeeper from the locality from morning 9 am until 5 pm. He gets no payment at all.

Chaman was motivated by the staff of *Anthony's bread* to join the evening class organized by us, so that he can learn to read and write and do basic calculations. He completed this course along with other boys and was happy to be part of this program. The field staff of *Anthony's bread* closely follow up the education of *Nisha* and *Gulsan*, the sisters of *Chaman*. They are studying in classes 1 and 3 in the local primary school.

We are organizing the evening class in *St. Anthony's School* for children who are drop outs. Teachers who stay in the school campus are conducting this class. A school vehicle is send to pick them up from their villages and drop them back. To prepare these children to join the class, field staff visit their families and motivate the child and also his family. They are made aware how important it is to know to read and write even when they are able to earn a living. Though a few who join this program drop out after one or two weeks, most of them stay on till the end and get a completion certificate.



All are proud to receive the completion certificate.





Central Government of India scraps 500 and 1,000 rupee notes overnight !

« *Black money and corruption are the biggest obstacles in eradicating poverty,* » Mr Modi, the prime minister, had promised the people of India to fight against corruption and now he has taken a big step towards it.

On November 8 evening he announced that the 500 (7 €) and 1,000 rupee banknotes would be withdrawn from the financial system overnight. All banks were closed. ATM machines were also not working next day. Only airports, railway stations and hospitals could accept the old notes until 11 November. People had to exchange their money at banks between 10 November and 30 December. Only a limited amount of money could be withdrawn from the bank or ATM. Not a single news organization seemed to know this was coming. This surely has caught the country completely off guard.

The 500 and 1,000 rupee notes are the highest denomination notes in the country and are extremely common in India. This sudden withdrawal made a big panic all over the country. For several weeks, the chaos continued, banks ran out of notes, with unending queues in front of the bank all over the country. Though this has been a very

panicking situation, the majority of people who are fed up of corruption, black money and tax evasion, initially welcomed this move.

At the root of this chaos is the fact that India is an overwhelmingly paper currency country : some 85% of the transactions are done with cash. India's cash-to-GDP ratio is 12%, some four times the one of Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. More than half of Indians still don't have a bank account, and some 300 million have no government identification like ID, passport, Pan card etc. The two scrapped denominations - 500 and 1,000 rupees - account for more than 85% of the value of cash in circulation. Belgium is the country that stands first for the bank transaction and India is the country which is the biggest cash economy, 85 % of the transactions are done by cash.



Everywhere, everyday, queues are forming in front of banks and ATMs.

So, 23 billions notes ceased to be legal tender at midnight on Nov. 8th. The capacity of the RBI's printing press is only 3 billion notes per month. To exchange note for like note, it will take seven months. Also, two third of bank branches are located in metro, urban and semi-urban areas, only one third are in villages and the distance to nearest branch could be several kilometers, so this made the situation really difficult in the rural areas. Also, many of the rural population do not have ATM cards and bank accounts.

Inevitably, low-income and rural households have been hardest hit by Modi's currency reform. Barter economies have reportedly sprung up in many towns and villages. Month of November is wedding season and people spend a lot of money in cash for the wedding. This situation made to call off scores of weddings and Indian stocks plunged below their 200 day moving average.

Even after one month, the chaos continues. The objectives behind this action is welcomed by the nation, but the way it is done is strongly criticized.

The first batch of Class 12

The first batch of St. Anthony's school has completed their higher secondary school education and left the school in May 2016. Most of them are continuing to do higher studies in the near by cities like *Moradabad* and some are preparing to appear for the entrance exam to get into government universities through merit list. Few of them have gone to *Delhi* for getting special coaching. Few of them are continuing with bachelors degree from a local college which is affiliated to a university. Two of them who did not clear the exams, are preparing to appear with the next batch in may 2017.

Pallavi, has scored the highest marks in St. Anthony's first batch. She was one of the first students who joined in 2003 and was sponsored. She has an ambition to become an IPS (*Indian Police Service*) Officer and she knows that it is really dif-

ficult to reach her aim. After her class 12th, she joined a secretarial course in *Moradabad*, hoping to get a government job in this field. Her plan is first to get a job and be independent, and then build up her carrier as an IPS officer. She has high potential and determination and she is working very hard to reach there. This is one of our first girls and we hope to have many more like her breaking barriers and getting through their lives.

To promote higher education of girls, *Uttar Pradesh Government* has a scheme called *Kanya Vidya Dhan*. (*Girls educational support*). This award is given to all the girls who pass class 12 with distinction. *Pallavi* got in the merit list, she received a cheque of Rs.30,000 from the Cabinet minister of *Uttar Pradesh*.



Pallavi now, receiving her grant from the U.P. Government...



...and in 2004, in St. Anthony's School.