

SJDT's Mission

An analysis of from where our orphanage girls come from and how we educate and mould them and how they settle in their life.

A Lot of times we are asked of a question, "From where and from what background are the girls coming to our orphanage and what happens to these boy and girls once they leave the orphanage?" We are trying to answer these questions in this write-up note.

Background:

It is now 30 years since we started our first orphanage (i.e., Pudhu Vasantham) and within a gap of 5 years, we started the other orphanages, that are Pudhu Punal, Pudhu Irudhayam and Pudhu Udhayam (centre for differently abled children). Over the years, every year 25-30 girls complete 12th standard and leave our orphanages out of which some of them continue their college studies from our orphanages itself and most others go to a different college of their choice. The very encouraging and rewarding experience for us is that all our girls pass through 12th standard successfully, scoring average to very good marks. **This gives us lots of satisfaction and we are very proud and thank our sponsors for their generosity in supporting our children for several years.**

From where our girls come from?

1) Abandoned babies:

For some years, when the government allowed us to receive babies, we received many, many girl babies and few boy babies, including several 'a-day-old' babies. Most of the babies were unwanted ones and some of them would have been killed due to female infanticide situations. We rescued them and brought them up in our orphanages. As many as around 65 babies were brought up in our orphanages. But over the years, the government is having their own reception homes and so such babies we are not allowed to admit anymore. We can only admit girls above 5 years of age.

2) Abandoned children of parent who are separated and choose to marry other partners:

In these situations, culturally, the children become a hindrance to find a new partner and so they handover the children to us. Many such types of children also come into our orphanage.

3) Single- parent situations:

Many children who come to us are from families where husband or wife die or run away and in such situations the single parent is the one who has to take care of the children. But they cannot take care of them due to their poverty condition of going to coolie work for daily wages, which is the only income for their livelihood. Moreover, when the children come back after school, there will be no one to protect them until the adult comes back from work, which is almost often at night. It is in this conditions they admit the children in our orphanages.

4) Children of destitute families:

We receive many children from these backgrounds who face very many problems such as irregular employment that lead to struggles to provide the basic needs of their children, such as food, clothing and education. The same, or even worse, situations are experienced by families where the husband is a drunkard or a loafer. At times, families experience a situation of a member having terminal illness. In these abusive situations, the family seek admission for their children in our orphanage for protection and education.

5) Children of Dalit and Tribal Families:

In the case of tribal families, the village settlements are located in remote hill stations and access to schools is almost impossible. The children have to walk long distances through risky jungles to reach a school (where the teacher may not be present always). Moreover, when the children come back, the parents may not be present to receive them which adds further risk to the children.

In the case of very poor Dalit children, Dalit families also experience the same type of problem: very meagre income, not enough to feed everyone and provide basic necessities such as clothing and school provisions (etc.). in these conditions, parents seek admission to our orphanage.

I have listed out many of these dire situations of families whose children come to our orphanages seeking admission, so as to get accommodation, feeding, clothing and quality education.

SJDT's overall goal regarding girl's education:

When children come into SJDT's care, they are usually at the primary school level, that is between 5 – 10 years of age and we have plan to provide support and education to them until minimum university bachelor degree level of education, that is 21 years of age. At times, if she wants to pursue post-graduation or professional course such as engineering, nursing, medical courses, it will include 2 more years of education, that is up to 23 years.

It is good to note that in India, if an individual wants a decent job with a decent income, a university bachelor degree is a basic need. We want our children to get settled in life with a good, decent job, so as to stand on her own legs to support her future family.

What happens to our girls after they complete their education at SJDT:?

1. 20% of our girls complete their higher studies, that is, a degree or professional course such as nursing, computer, engineering (etc.) and settle into very well-paid permanent jobs and happily get married and have good family.
2. 80% of our children complete the bachelor's programme and go for employment. They are mostly employed in cell phone parts assembling companies or textile companies or as sales girls in a big clothing and other types of shops. They mostly work for some years and earn middle-range income and get married. After marriage, they raise their children. During this time, they engage in some income-generating activities to support the families and the

education of their own children. After some years their own children have grown up, they try to find another full-time job.

Final Comments:

As I conclude this write up. I can for sure say that the children who are under our care become a new generation of educated individuals in their own families and in their villages. They acquire good values of life and develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Economically they have developed skills for employment and better off in bringing up children who aspire to get good education.

Above all, our girls feel equal (gender equality) and feel they also have a very important role in their family as well as in the society.

Expression of gratitude:

We thank all our sponsors and supporters who sacrifice and support our children for many, many years of their education. This is indeed a noble and venerable sacrifice and generosity. We are creating a new generation with a new vision of educated women who can transform the world. As a supporter, you are taking full responsibility of transforming a feeble little girl child into a grown-up, beautiful young lady with lots of energy and vision for her own life. This is indeed an amazing contribution you make to our society. The new age generation we build will remember you for the future generations to come.

**Dr. I. Sebastian,
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Photo Gallery











