

## **Red Light Beggars**



**I am a  
girl child,  
don't make  
me a child  
mother**

# Editorial



She was born in an obscure village of Macedonia in modern Europe. In the prime of her life, she decided to dedicate her life to the mission of education in India and was successful in educating girls from well-to-do families. As a true educator with a vast vision of life, she introspected on the relevance of her current mission within the context of her environment. She was deeply moved by the poverty of her neighbours and was urged to make a radical decision to tread the unbeaten path. Her small acts of life-giving charity to those in need - the abandoned, the sick and the dying - churned up a Tsunami of love and life-giving kindness to needy thousands across the globe. This great woman of grit, Mother Teresa, was recognised globally and honoured with the Nobel Prize.

Today the media constantly project icons of excellence - sports stars, actors, singers and political leaders - most of whom are ironically on disastrous ego trips with no heart for humanity. Contrary to current trends, like a rare comet among the millions of stars, Mother Teresa captured the heart of the world as an icon of love for humanity. In declaring Mother Teresa a saint (Saint Teresa of Kolkata), the world once again affirms

her as a monumental icon of the art of giving life to any one in dire need.

For BoscoNet, she is a great inspiration and model, to promote its mission in the art of giving life and sharing of resources. If one Mother Teresa could move the world with her love for the poor and solidarity with them, the challenge for us today is to continue this mission of love in giving to those who are in need. Mother Teresa's love for humanity went beyond all barriers of nation, colour, creed, culture, or any identity of difference. Her powerful inner eyes could perceive a need in any human being. In a recent man-made tragedy, four young women followers of Mother Teresa, gave up their lives in standing by the aged and the dying, irrespective of their creed, in a hospital in war-torn Yemen.

Mother Teresa brought light into the lives of thousands, from the streets of Kolkata to the sidewalks and shanties across the cities of the world, who were groping in darkness. This angel of the streets with her angelic look penetrated the hearts of those who were longing for love. Her smile lit up, as on Diwali, the faces of those whom she encountered. She made the eyes and faces of those whom

she met shine brilliantly, as our faces light up with light and happiness when we celebrate Diwali.

The story of Mother Teresa should remind us of the potential and power of every girl child. This year Bosconet rightly focuses on the empowerment of the girl child, who should be provided an apt and safe ambience to become a woman. Every girl who grows up right could be the agent of transformation of our world, beginning from her family.

Diwali, the festival of light, is fast approaching. On behalf of the team at BoscoNet, I thank all our partners who have come forward generously with the heart of Mother Teresa, to help our young people in need. She challenges us to put a smile on every face with a heart full of love to share and to give life and light to those who survive on the fringe of society. May your life be rewarded with the blessings of love and light for reaching out to those in dire need.

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# Red Light Beggars



**M**iss Sonia, who was working in a star hotel, gave up her job to dedicate her life for those children on the street begging at the red light traffic intersections for their survival. Sonia asked them: “Will you be friends with

us?” The children, in all their innocence, replied with a prompt yes. It was a touching moment for Sonia who began to work for them. Sonia became a regular visitor to their slum - Harijan-Basti, Palam Flyover – New Delhi.

The initial response was not welcoming from the parents. They were worried about their children being stolen away. However, the daily visits, medical treatment for injured children and the friendly approach paved the way slowly for a change in attitude. Her interest was to help the children in education and to get them out of begging.

Soon Sonia started giving non-formal evening classes in a park near the Health Centre and did so for 8

months. But later the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) authorities asked her to stop the activities in the park.

Sonia continued the classes under the flyover; but the place was too dirty and hot to sit and study and it was also dangerous for the children. She then took them to the back of the temple and later back to the slum and continued there for two months. Sonia’s school for slum children became a mobile school, like the oratory of Don Bosco in Turin.

Meanwhile, DB YaR Forum staff and Holy Family Orphanage for Girls joined together and conducted a mela. There were games, dance and singing, and distribution of prizes. Such programmes boosted their confidence and motivated the children.

A research was conducted by the Forum to get the accurate statistics of the slum area. Using the report, the fathers approached the Delhi Education Department, requesting the authorities to allow the use of the school space after the school hours. The authorities neither cared nor heard them.

Still the effort continued with the Government authorities, like the head of the State Education Department, Chief Minister's office and various leaders of political parties; but none of them gave a positive response. Sonia then, along with twenty women from the slum, visited Ms. Bhavna Gaur, the local MLA, asking for basic amenities which she had promised in her election campaign, all to no avail.

Fr. Swanoop Choudhry SDB, the Director of Don Bosco Ashalayam then agreed on providing a place for the children to be taught.

After some months of regular training and basic education, YaR Forum managed to enroll 56 slum children in the MCD School, Palam Gaon, Delhi.

Aadhaar card was also arranged for fourteen children, to prove their identity.

Next, they needed school bags, uniforms and other stationery. These were arranged as a donation by BoscoNet, and other friends of the YaR Forum who generously gave their support to the children.

Continuous follow-up programmes are planned to support these children. Socio-economic conditions led the families to move to the city and live in slums. The worst affected in such situations are the children and the young. If the necessary interventions were not undertaken, they would have turned to anti-social activities.





# Youth breaks gender barrier in profession



**S**wathi.B is a young girl, with the courage to break taboos, born in Tharalapally village in Warangal District, Telangana.

After her schooling, she did her diploma in Electrical Engineering at a Government College. In the two-year long course, she was able to learn only the theory of electrical circuits, as the course was limited to classroom teaching. This proved to be a major disadvantage when it came to getting an employment. At this juncture of running into walls in the employment field, Swathi came to know about the course offered by DB Tech in the electrical domain.

She saw an opportunity and convinced her parents to let her take up the course. Initially her parents hesitated, as this would require her to go away from home to the hostel. But finally they let her go, sensing her desire to learn.

Swathi recalls, “From the first day onwards I liked the place and the people. Because of this, even the little fear I had went away and I was able to concentrate fully on what was being taught. There were even more surprises for us; we were not learning only about electricals, we had classes in spoken English, computers, personality development, time management, etc. It was the first time that I was learning so many things that were meant to help me grow and develop as a totally new person.

“I am more confident now that I will be a very successful electrician, and more importantly, a more brave and courageous woman. I am very grateful to Don Bosco Tech at DBHRDC (Don Bosco Human Resource Development Centre) Gagillapuram, for giving me such a golden opportunity to build my career.”

## Overcoming physical hurdles

**“I** am Nathala Mahalakshmi, I suffered an electric shock before marriage due to which my right hand is partly dysfunctional. This handicap often made me feel depressed. Managing the household and the education of my two sons with just my husband’s income from casual field labour, was difficult.

“One day I attended a meeting conducted by Bosco Seva Kendra - Chaitanya MACS (Mutually Aided Co-operative Service) in my village.



I started making small sacrifices and saved Rs. 50 and joined a group. I did not tell my husband about this. After six months I got my first loan of Rs. 5,000. I was really happy and gave it to my husband. He was surprised and proud of my decision. We used the amount for our son's educational expenses.

"I continued to save small amounts and deposited them into my MACS account. Later, we bought a

buffalo and sold milk, while my husband continued to work as a farm-hand. Our household income has since improved greatly.

"We are grateful to Chaitanya MACS for the tremendous support and guidance that have made our lives so much better. We hope they reach out to more and more women like me and transform their lives too."

## Don Bosco Navajeevan provides hope to the needy.

I am Madhasu Ankarao from Medicherla, Guntur District, Telangana. When I was in class 8 my father passed away. I continued going to school for two years and completed my X class. Then I joined the intermediate, but could not continue due to family financial crisis. For the sake of my brother and sister, and my aging sick mother, I discontinued my education. Family responsibility forced me to take

up work as an agricultural coolie; but I could not get sufficient income through this. I decided to move to the city for better income earning job opportunities.

I reached Warangal and worked there as a mason in Battala Bazar area. I could not get a regular, continuous job and this work was only for two or three days a week. I used to sleep at the workplace or



some time at the railway platform nearby the adda (labour-gathering point). It was a real street life. It was the worst stage of my life.

One evening, at the railway station I saw volunteers of Don Bosco Homeless Shelter going around talking to people. I approached them with curiosity and told them my situation. I was speechless when they agreed to give me a shelter on a temporary basis. I

was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude.

Recently I started a bread-omelet centre near the railway station, with the idea and moral support of the shelter staff. I am now able to help my family financially and I am regularly in contact with my family.

I am planning to extend it as tiffin centre and I plan to get a room for myself very soon.

**“SCS is the place where I was hatched from a cocoon to become the butterfly,”**

**says the popular national award winner actor of the Bhutanese Film Industry.**



**C**hencho Dorji, of the 2006 batch of English Honours, feels his days at Salesian College Sonada (SCS) are the best formative years of his life. In his words “like an egg I was enrolled in SCS, got hatched, got little feet and wings under the warmth of SCS, my little wings grew stronger, strong enough to fly high.” He won the best student award in 2006. He was the general secretary and students’ representative in 2006 and was also in the college basketball team.

He was the first Bhutanese student of Salesian College. Acting was his passion and he was always keen to make his carrier as an actor. After graduation from SCS he was offered a small role in a Bhutanese film. After that he did four films as a supporting actor. In 2006 he was offered the lead role in the film Tshering Met that was the turning point of his carrier. Till today he has acted in 49 feature films, produced 4 feature films, directed 2 films and won 4 national film awards as best actor in the films Seday (2009) Shadha Simo (2010) Chi Sem Chi Lu (2011) Samoo (2015).

“Fly higher and spread the message ‘flamma ardens et lucens - a flame that enlightens and enlivens -” is his message for his junior groups of alumni and students of Salesian College.

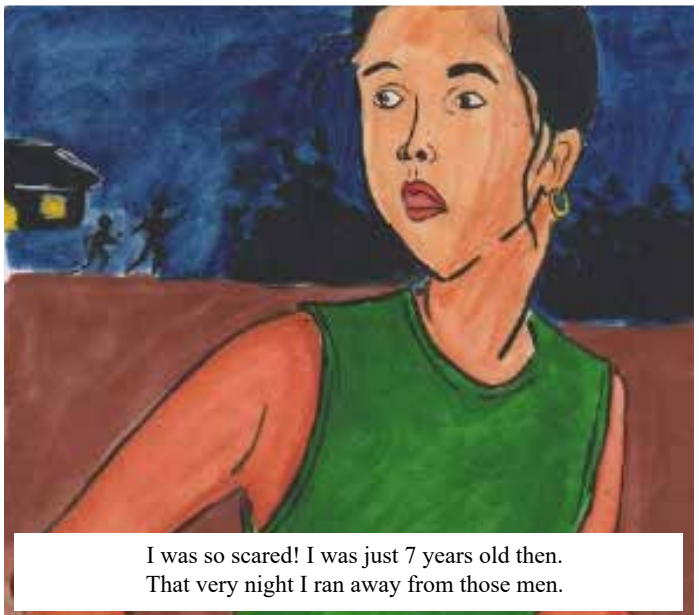
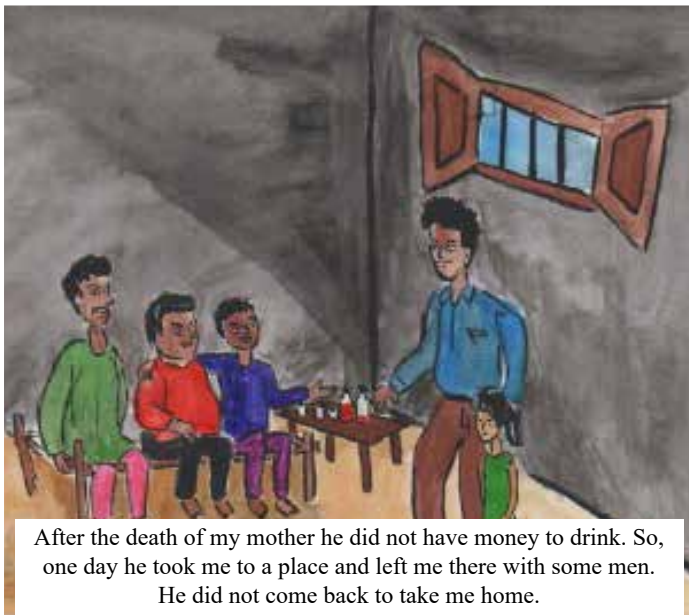
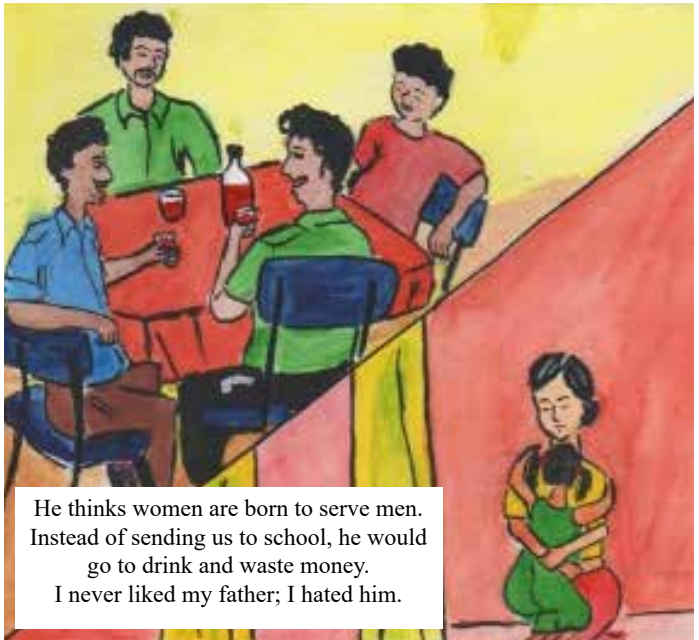
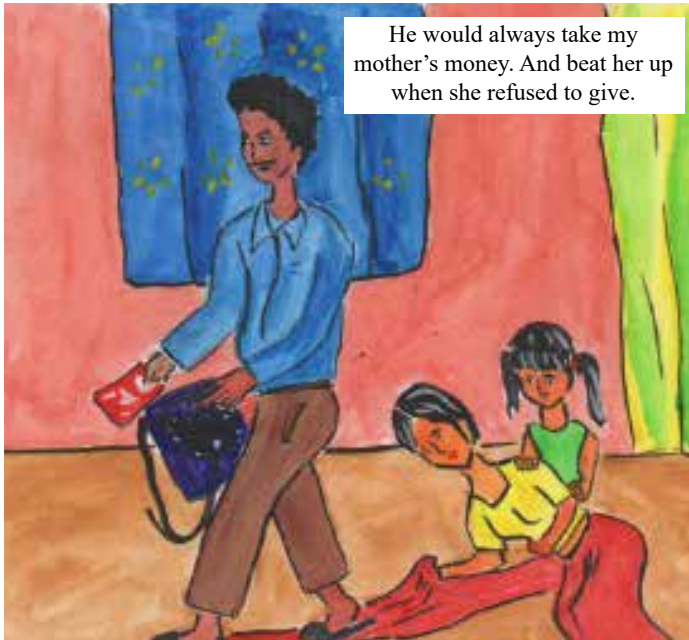
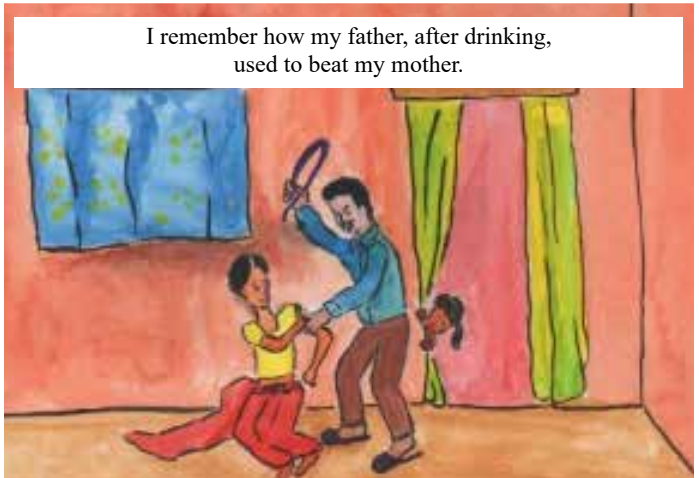
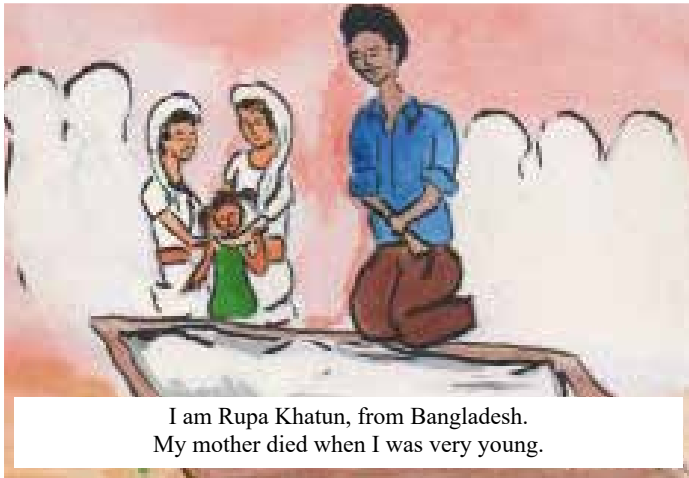




# "I AM NOT FOR SALE!"

(Based on a true story)

Sketch & Colour : Yaomashun Zimik | Illustration : Angel Zimik





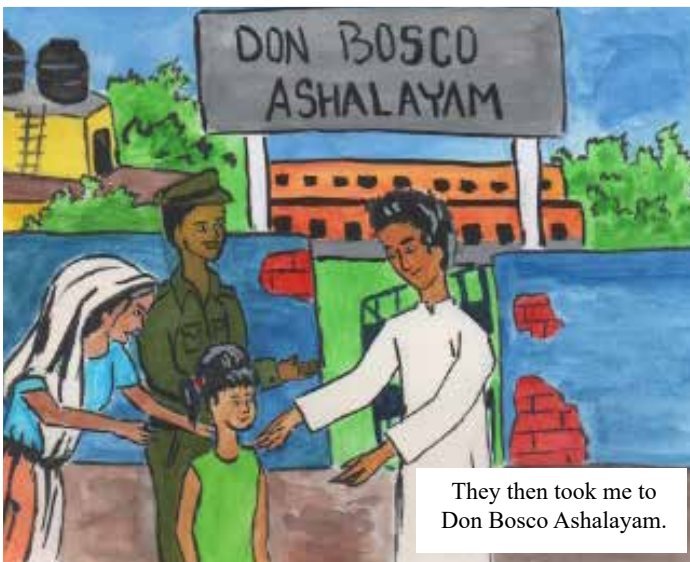
I reached one place. I met one lady there, I told her my story.



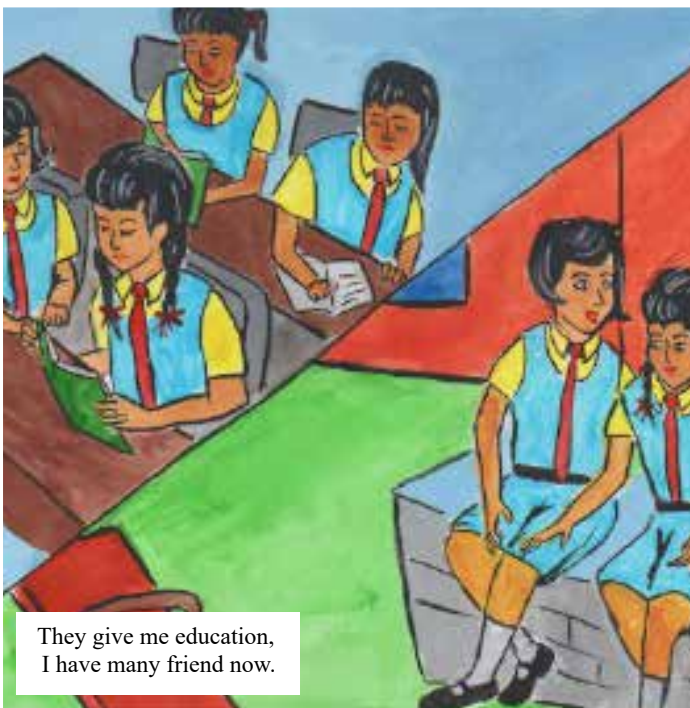
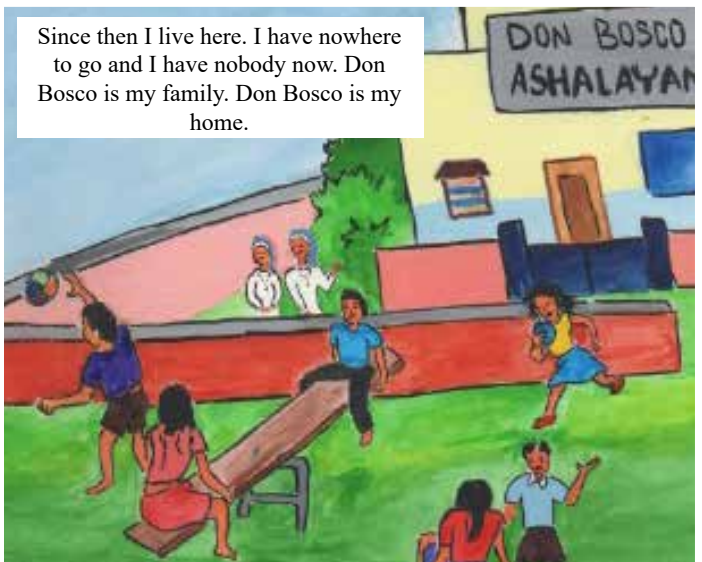
She helped me go to the police station.



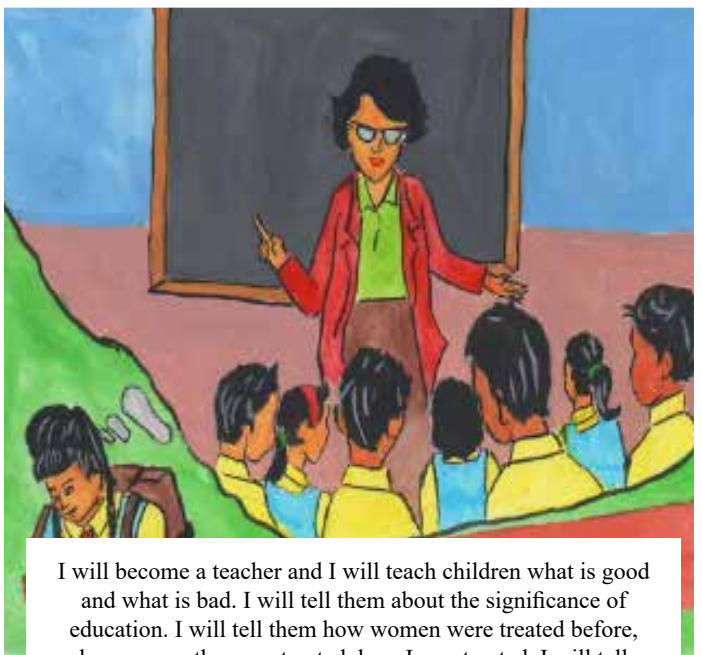
Since then I live here. I have nowhere to go and I have nobody now. Don Bosco is my family. Don Bosco is my home.



They then took me to Don Bosco Ashalayam.



They give me education, I have many friend now.



I will become a teacher and I will teach children what is good and what is bad. I will tell them about the significance of education. I will tell them how women were treated before, how my mother was treated, how I was treated. I will tell them the bitter truth of my story. I will be their example.

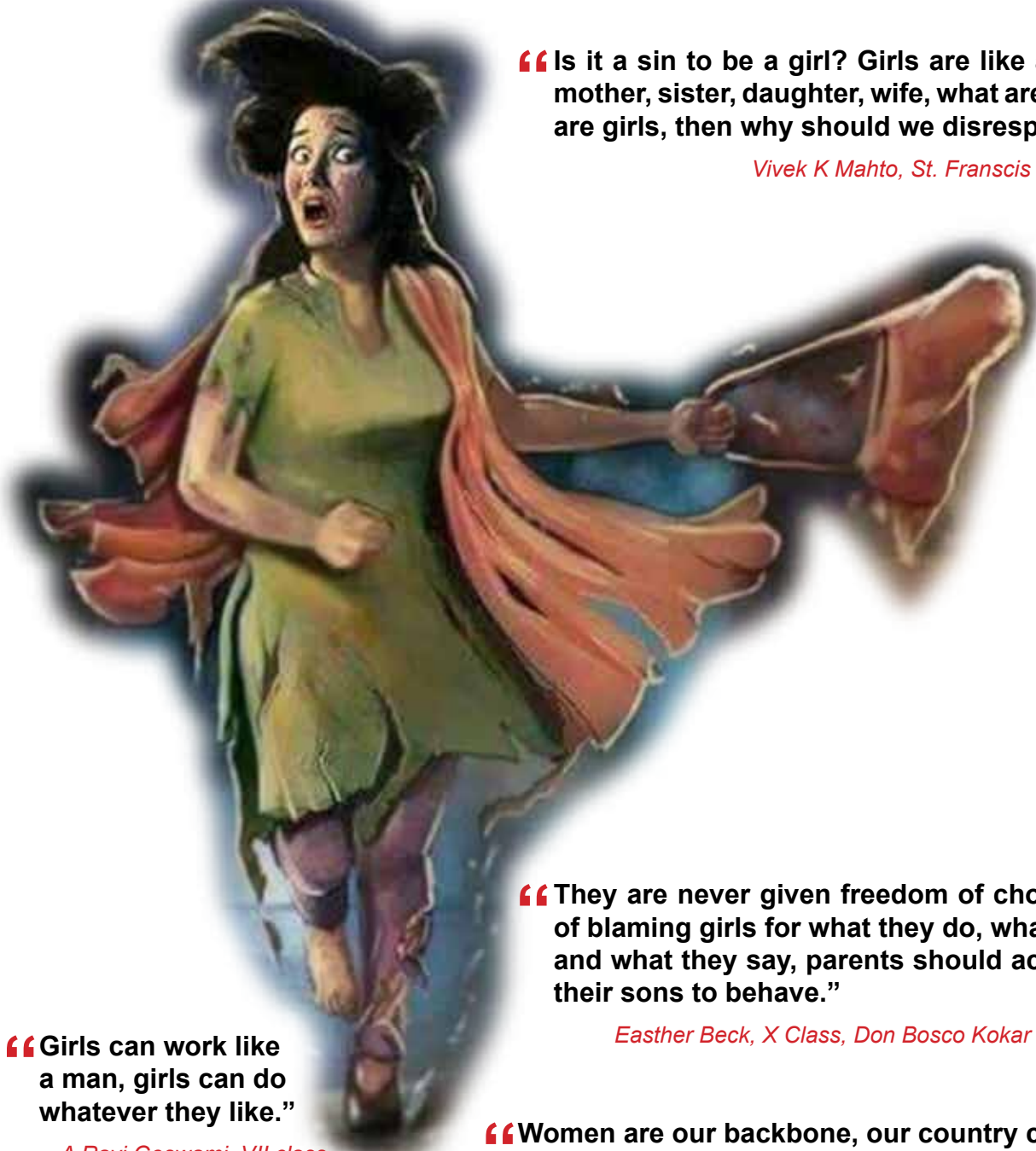
## Students expressed their stand on the Girl Child issue in India, as part of BoscoNet's school fund raising and social awareness programme:

“Save a girl child, because if you kill a girl child today, you are killing your next generation.”

*Shreya Suman, IX Class, Ursuline convent school, Ranchi.*

“Is it a sin to be a girl? Girls are like a boon. Our mother, sister, daughter, wife, what are they? They are girls, then why should we disrespect girls?”

*Vivek K Mahto, St. Francis school, Ranchi.*



“Girls can work like a man, girls can do whatever they like.”

*A Ravi Goswami, VII class,  
Don Bosco mark Hr. Sec.  
School, Chennai.*

“They are never given freedom of choice. Instead of blaming girls for what they do, what they wear, and what they say, parents should actually teach their sons to behave.”

*Easter Beck, X Class, Don Bosco Kokar school, Ranchi.*

“Women are our backbone, our country cannot run without women. Respect and save women.”

*M Janani, VIII Class, Don Bosco Matric Hr. Sec. School, Chennai.*



# “Swachh Bharat Campaign” Swachh Toilet

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**T**hanks to Bro. T.V. Mathew and his students, water has been made easily available for use inside the toilets, as well as for bathing outside, in a totally new design by DBSERI.

The final year Civil Engineering Technicians of Don Bosco Self Employment Research Institute (DBSERI) have taken up in earnest the promotion of the SWACHH BHARAT PROGRAMME of the Government of India, and have built a number of state-of-

the-art toilets, which are very economical and user-friendly.

8 toilets were constructed for the neediest families in the immediate vicinity of DBSERI by a small group of students, 3 boys and 2 girls, within a short period of 40 days. The students have put in quality time and lot of hard work to complete the project within this very short period of time. The project was part of their mandatory practical project work for obtaining





the “Civil Engineering Technician’s Certificate” of the Council for Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), New Delhi.

Two professors deputed from the Bengal Engineering Institute of Science and Technology (BEIST) to evaluate the project were highly impressed with the toilets’ design and workmanship.

Our outgoing students of Civil Engineering Technicians course (CET) were overjoyed with the marks they scored. Howrah Municipal Corporation has expressed great satisfaction at this unique venture undertaken by the outgoing Civil Engineering Technicians of DBSRI.





# Naresh Finds His Home After Eight Years

**Y**oung Naresh Baral, who lost his parents, finds his home again. Naresh, a boy of Ashalayam, hailing from Nepal, lost his family in Kanpur railway station as a seven-year old child in 2008. The eight years of pain due to separation from his family melted away like wax as he met his brother and father on 27 July 2016.

We whole-heartedly thank Mr. Govind, a staff member of Ashalayam, by whose intervention the father and brother of the child could reach Don Bosco Ashalayam – Lucknow. Young Naresh is now with his family.

## Jewel of India Award for Fr. Thomas



**F**r. K. A. Thomas SDB, founder-director of the Institution for Culture and Rural Development (I-CARD), Jorhat, was awarded the “Jewel of India Gold Medal Award” and a Certificate of Excellence, by the International Institute of Education and Management (IIEM), New Delhi. The award was presented by Dr. Bhishmanarayan Singh, former Governor of Assam, for his excellent community development services. The award ceremony was held during a seminar on “Education and Socio-economic Development” at the Indian Society of International Law, on 25 July 2016.

On the same occasion, the Indian Solidarity Council, New Delhi, presented Fr. Thomas the “Vijay Rattan Gold Medal Award” and a Certificate of Excellence for his outstanding achievements.

It is to be noted that Fr. K. A. Thomas SDB, was given a fellowship by Ashoka Innovators for the Public, a USA based organization. Already in 2002, he had become one of 250 specially selected social entrepreneurs of India, for his work with school dropouts. Ashoka thus recognised him as a high calibre entrepreneur by this award into a global fellowship.

“It usually takes just one youngster to transform a village,” said the founder director of I-CARD.

# Support given by BoscoNet 2015-2016

- Scholarship assistance for technical and formal education to students in diverse centres, spread across the geographical regions of the following PDOs (Provincial Development Office):

Don Bosco Development Society - Kolkata

Don Bosco Development Society - Silchar

Salesians of Don Bosco North East India, Guwahati

Salesians of Don Bosco, Dimapur

The Bangalore Salesian Society

The Salesians Brothers Society, Delhi

- Assistance to the Chennai flood relief efforts
- Support for the LIBRARIES at Don Bosco rehabilitation centers at Gulbarga, Bangalore
- Support for the child right education in Government schools, Bangalore
- Support for the education of lepers' children in Ranchi
- Support for the street children centre, Delhi
- Support for children welfare, Delhi
- Marriage assistance to 2 orphan girls, Delhi
- Medical Assistance to Mr. James Biswas, Kolkata
- Medical assistance to Mr. Rakesh Jonah
- Medical assistance to Mr. Akhup
- Support for the training expenses of HomeLink, Delhi
- Scholarship assistance to the students of Don Bosco College, Karaikal
- Support to DBSERI, Kolkata for purchasing tools for women entrepreneurs of its NARIPRISE Project
- Support for NEPAL Earth quake victims and the relief operations there
- Clothes donation to poor people in Assam







# Mother Teresa,

a Catholic nun who devoted her life to helping India's poor, began her work from the festering slums of Kolkata and gradually spread her work across the world, has been declared a saint of the Catholic Church in a canonisation Mass presided over by Pope Francis in the Vatican, on 5 September, 2016.

*"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier."*

Saint Teresa of Kolkata

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# HAPPY DIWALI

Let us fill our homes with prayers and light,  
not with fumes and explosions.

In this festival season, may the light of God's love  
shine on you and your family. May God reward you for  
the smile you bring on the faces of the poor.



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