

Amala Anbu Karangal , AAK

*"Immaculate Loving Hands"*



CHILD AID

**Giving Girls the Chance  
they Deserve**

It isn't simply  
**black and white**

**NEWS**

**1**  
SUPPORT  
during 2010

this project is  
trying to  
bring some ...

**Colour**

into the lives of  
these Children

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**Amala Anbu Karangal , AAK** for short, is a project to help some of the most vulnerable people trying to survive alone on the streets in Indian cities.

**Who are these people ?** Well, in short they are girls without parents, girls who for one reason or another have been deserted, left to fend for themselves ... And being girls in India that is no easy task. In this Newsletter we will tell you a little more about AAK, how it came about, some of the girls stories and **Child Aid's** aim in trying to help.

**Let us first of all paint the picture ;** a child is living with their Mother and Father, one parent gets ill and maybe dies, so creating a 'one parent' family, in India this is difficult enough, but then the other parent either finds he/she has to work too hard, or contracts an illness and dies,

or a mother finds life too hard and goes to live in another village with another man !

**And her children ?** No man will want to support girls - it costs to marry them off, also no relative will take girls under their wing - for a similar reason. So what happens ; the girls beg on the streets or collect saleable waste from rubbish tips.

A tough life ? **It is absolutely NO LIFE,** So a group of religious sisters decided to do something about it. They had donated to them a house, then set about rescuing as many of these girls they could to come and stay in the house - they would be fed, clothed and given a schooling. Simply to get the children to believe there could be a better world was not as easy as it might seem, they trusted no one. But as soon as the house was established, the sisters found that they had created a problem for themselves, the girls kept

coming, everyone knew about the good work being undertaken, to the point where the sisters couldn't fund the very big task they had embarked upon.

By the time **Child Aid** came on the scene there were around eighty girls within the house, and this was rising day-by-day, month-by-month, of course you cannot turn children away, so they asked for our help, how could we refuse - **if we are going to appeal to you, we should tell you a little more about AAK.**

**Hard to believe,** but every single one of these girls shown, were either rescued from rubbish tips, begging on the streets or found in highly vulnerable situations.

**Can you help us to help them ?** Our first Newsletter tells about **AAK** and provides some of the stories of these Street Children.

# Once upon a time ... but this is no Fairy Story !

We do not think it fair to place these children's stories against their pictures, but we **would** like to tell you their stories - now they all have happy smiling faces so you probably wouldn't believe the stories anyway, they are all now living a new life. We can tell you one thing however, but it will not help, all these smiling faces were not so smiling before they came to AAK, now they all feel they have found a new world, a home and it is up to us, together with all the AAK Sisters and their helpers, to ensure that it remains **their** new found world ... at least until they can go into the real world themselves, as well educated and happy adults. They are all now embarking on that journey. We are only trying to ensure that it happens.



**Story 1 :** An entire family of children lost their parents ; mother committed suicide and father died of a viral fever. However, the father, due to illness, was heavily in debt to the family's landlord. The landlord wanted the girls under custody for clearing the debt, with a social worker's help and a psychologist's report the landlord had to look elsewhere for redress ... and the children, all are now in AAK, doing what children should do, have a childhood, a home and friends, school, a meal **and a future.**

**Story 2 :** This girl's mother ran away from home and her father married another woman, who did not like father's child and was cruel to her, she ran away and was found in a busstand ... luckily you can now find her in AAK.

**Story 3 :** This little girl was simply abandoned when her parents remarried different people. Grandmother tried to take care of her, but grandmother was old and poor , so now AAK are doing this - a happy little girl.

**Story 4 :** This little girl's father murdered her mother. He was imprisoned, but was later allowed out on bail, but could not look after his daughter, so grandmother took on the task. But again, grandmother was elderly, very poor, so finally she was brought to AAK. This little lady is so delighted, she now has many friends, she goes to school, and is excellent with her studies, in fact she has achieved prizes at school ... And the past, hopefully, may be fading.

**Story 5:** AAK has some terrible stories to tell, but none worse than this little girl's. She witnessed her father beheading her mother and for some long time after she was unable to speak and hear. She went to stay with her uncle but he really could not look after her so he brought her to AAK ; it took her a long while to adapt, but she now feels safe and has just started to speak, she goes to school and has a safe home - no matter how safe, how can that trauma fade. AAK can only help a little, but for this little girl, a little is sufficient.

**Story 6 :** This little girl's mother was a rag picker, both she and mother lived under a bridge and it was only a matter of time before mother found it impossible to feed her children. In Salem there is also a boys home for Street Children and one of the senior boys knew of this little girl and took her to AAK. A new life a new child, she is now attending school and is very good in her studies, and loves dancing.

**Story 7 :** Their mother hanged herself, not uncommon when a family finds it cannot simply take any more ; father was a coolie and lives away from home. These children went to school, and fortunately their teacher knew of their situation and brought them to AAK, the rest is just another story.

**AAK has a 'hundred' and more such stories. If you can help us keep AAK growing, this would be the best story ever.**

# Girls in India

The number of girls leaving home is a serious issue in India ; girls go onto the streets for many different reasons. In almost all instances poverty within the family is the major driving force, parents unable to find work, or maybe simply unable to work themselves due to sickness, have to send their children onto the streets to work and due to sickness being prevalent in these families, many children often have only one parent sometimes none, girls become the surrogate parent, looking after siblings cleaning and even earning the family income.

Girls who have no parents will rarely be invited to stay with relatives, such a permanency will mean a real liability for the relations and no income coming into the home, the result, girls inevitably have no alternative but to take to the streets as 'rag pickers', Bus Stand beggars ...

But a girl's story rarely ends even there. Intermediaries promising them bright futures are all around looking for these girls, to them a girl is income, is profit ! These girls are high on the list for child trafficking, domestic helpers - often many miles from where they grew up, sometimes even in another country - and worse, many are pushed into the 'flesh trade' in big cities. These children, without someone to help them, become highly marketable commodities.

'Amala Anbu Karangal', AAK, has been set up to rescue as many of these children as they can, to date they have around eighty children to look after, but this number is a very small part of the problem.

Child Aid is working with AAK to build many more AAKs, the project is not short of helpers, but it is short of resources. **Every child who comes to AAK receives first and foremost a secure environment in which to live, a regular meal, clothing and, most important, schooling - something they grasp with both hands, they have never had the opportunity and it is a delight to see the enthusiasm to learn.**



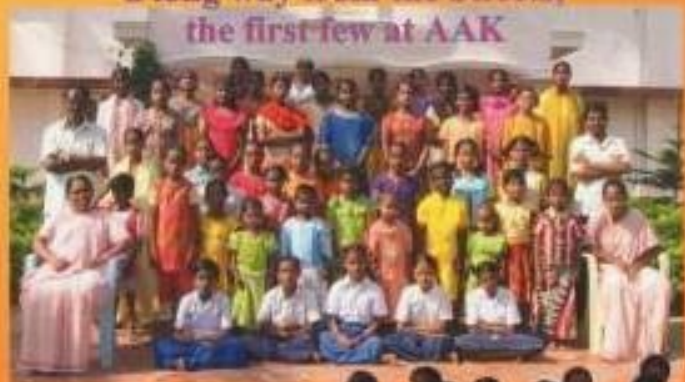
*These girls used to live in the rag trade, but not the rag trade as we in the west know it - they used to collect rags to sell and get a living income.*

**They** could never believe it, for the first time in their lives, these children are off to school - and in school uniform ; to go to school was beyond their wildest dreams, but to go to school in a uniform - like the other children, allowing them to be part of normal life was something they could only dream about, but not now. Some of the stories these children have brought to the AAK House are beyond belief, this Newsletter will tell you *only* some.

All children deserve an equal chance of a brighter future,  
We at **Child Aid** are aiming to help to make that a reality.



**Happy Faces now,  
a long way from the Streets,  
the first few at AAK**



How can you help ?  
Please turn to the back page for full details

**You can support one of these girls, or the project in general, see our back page**