

Thank you for your interest in Help the Helpless and the beautiful children we support in India. When people approach me about Help the Helpless, there are usually several questions they ask: How much of the money goes to the children? Are the children being well cared for? Is the education good? Is there hope for the children when they grow up?

To answer these questions, I can tell you that almost all of the money donated to Help the Helpless goes to support the children in India. The work in America is almost entirely volunteer, but there are some operational expenses, e.g., printing, postage, etc. Therefore, nearly every cent that is donated goes to India.

The children are well cared for and well fed. Thanks to our generous benefactors, the children have good accommodations, they get decent clothing and they receive three meals every day. Many of the neighbors surrounding St. Mary's live in thatched huts and many are hungry. Fr. Antony called me one day and asked me what he should do because the children from the surrounding area were coming to the school looking for food. Fr. Antony felt guilty because he knew the donations were to support the children at the school. I told him that he needed to feed those children and that no one in America would complain about their money going to feed hungry children. He told me that he was already doing just that, but wanted to make sure it would be acceptable to the benefactors. After that, he even started to allow those same children to attend school at St. Mary's because they would otherwise receive no formal education.

When I was in India a high ranking government official arrived with his entire retinue, including police escort. He had come to present awards to some of the children. I was deeply moved by two points during that evening. The first was that award after award (these included full four year scholarships to colleges and engineering schools) was given to these students for being first or second in the entire country in a variety of categories. The second was that many of the young people who received these awards, both boys and girls, had to scoot up to the front of the hall on their behinds in order to receive their award.

Without the care and training these children receive at St. Mary's there would be little hope for them to survive except by begging or stealing. Now, thanks to the care, example and education they receive, there is actually a bright future for the beautiful young people. I should mention that the government official mentioned above was so moved by what he experienced that he took Fr. Antony aside and told him that he was there that night in an official capacity, but he wanted to come back as a visitor with his wife and children so that they could experience the hope, the joy and the love he saw and felt that night.

God bless you for your charity,

Fr. Robert J. Altier