

DHAN KARUNAI ILLAM

Cherishing Her Dream!

Ms. Radhika, a differently abled woman (single-headed), married Mr. Thavam. The couple soon blessed with a daughter Ms. Preethi and a son Mr. Nithis Pandian. When the family is leading a content life, distress erupted in the household in the form of dowry. At the time of marriage, Ms. Radhika has brought with her three sovereigns of gold as dowry but after the birth of children, Ms. Radhika's mother-in-law started torturing Ms. Radhika to bring an additional 10 sovereigns of gold from her parents and shoved Ms. Radhika with her two small kids from the family.

With nowhere to go, Ms. Radhika returned to her parents' home with her kids. After spending few months, imagining her mother-in-law's agitation might have softened, Ms. Radhika returned to her in-law's with her kids only to comprehend that her mother-in-law is not interested in welcoming them into the family and already arranged a second marriage to her son, claiming the reason to be Ms. Radhika's disabilities. Ms. Radhika permanently shift to her father's house. The kids never saw their father after that day. The only image of her father they had was when they were kids and stayed at their father's home.

Ms. Radhika admitted Ms. Preethi in Illam three years before. Currently Ms. Preethi is pursuing her 8th standard in Nadar High School, residing at Illam. Ms. Preethi always stood 1st in all the examinations in the class. DHAN's Reflection Publication Trust conducted an essay writing competition celebrating 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Illam children from 6th standard to 12th standard participated in the competition and Ms. Preethi won the 1st price in the competition. She is competitive, studious and always active.

Preethi says, 'Illam ensures my nutritional security as well supports my education. During festivals, Illam provides us with a new dress, to celebrate the festival just like any other child. Illam provided us a platform where we can envision our future and my ambition in life is to become a doctor and serve the poor children like me in the society, free of cost.'

Visit to Ms. Preethi's during July

'My aunt dislikes our stay at our maternal grandfather's house. During my stay at home, I witnessed my aunt's ill-treatment towards my mother. My mother owns a separate ration card for availing groceries and subsidiary items but currently it's under my aunt's possession. During lockdown, for our sustenance, we are depending on the groceries availed through our grandfather's ration card. My mother due to her disability rarely getting employed. She will be employed once a week earning a meagre of Rs. 50. On the other hand, I've joined in tailoring last month. Every month we've to pay Rs. 600 for the tailoring classes.'

During the visit, Illam staff paid off July month's tailoring class fee of Ms. Preethi and supplied groceries for the family.

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“I have a dream... I have a dream that one day in future I will become a doctor and serve the poor like me, free of cost... and...and...and I still believe in my dream!”