

A milestone has been reached this year as the first lad from this slum has embarked on a degree course and has become a volunteer at Vidiyal. This speaks volumes about the sense of pride and self esteem which the whole programme endeavours to instil in the youngsters. Here he is seen being congratulated on his achievements.



Rev Sally in Ambethkar Nagar

The Camp at Kodaikanal contributed by **Elaine Wright.**

On our visits to India we spend the first 9 days in Madurai, we celebrate the Anniversary, and then the second weekend we go away with the sponsored children, staff and helpers.

This time we went up into the hills, to Kodaikanal, which meant a 4 hour twisty bus journey for all of us. Kodaikanal is 7000 feet above sea level, a hill station, known as the Princess of Hills. It is popular as the temperature is cooler in the Indian summer. To us it was more like a summer's day, only about 24 degrees and somewhat cooler in the evenings, while Madurai had been about 34 degrees most of the time.

On Saturday morning we met the children at the beautiful Kodaikanal Lake and we all went out in boats, most of us in rowing boats with a man provided to row us. The older boys used pedalos.



The children then had the option to ride a horse or a bike, two per horse! The cyclists were allowed two circuits of the road around the lake, competing for road space with cars and horses, not a sign of a safety helmet!



We went back to their hostel for lunch where they were all keen to show us their rooms. They were mostly sleeping 5 per room, one double bed only between them all, but they were absolutely delighted with the bed and the bedding. In the afternoon we started with a visit to Coakers Walk, a kilometre walkway built on the steep mountain side. Unfortunately cloud obscured the views while we were there. The children had been advised to take jumpers, jackets and woolly hats for warmth and on arrival at Coakers Walk they were all given ear muffs! Many of the ear muffs never seemed to be removed all weekend but many of the children didn't even wear shoes!



From there we went into Bryant Park which is now a Botanical garden but with lots of space to play games. The children enjoyed cricket, ball games and the play area before leaving to go back to their hostel for some activities.

