



A view of one of the Madurai slums

It is estimated that there are 30,000 children living rough on the streets or in the slums of the city of Madurai. They survive by rag picking, scavenging in sewers, which run right past their homes, and begging. The caste system keeps these families in poverty.



NewDawn India supplies the funds for Vidiyal (Tamil for a New Dawn) which works with the street and slum children and their families. Over 300 children come daily to the Vidiyal drop-in centres which operate in the Madurai slums. The centres are run by Dr Jim Jesudoss, his wife Dr. Sharmila and their dedicated team. Here the children receive unconditional love, medical care and their emotional and material needs are met.

The children are placed in appropriate schools and colleges depending on their needs and aspirations. The drop-ins provide opportunities to complete homework, learn new skills such as dance, drama and karate and, most importantly, gain self esteem. There is a special emphasis on projects for children, healthcare, education and training, while outings and educational visits are part of the programme for all those who attend the Vidiyal drop-in centres.



Open green spaces during a trip to a hill station

Many of the older children become volunteers and help out at the various drop-in centres, while studying for bachelor and master's degrees. Vidiyal now has many graduates and the alumni are always ready to assist in any way they can.



Some of the graduates

The children attending the Vidiyal drop-in centres are taught to have respect for each other and girls are given the same opportunities as boys. The number of girls amongst the alumni is gradually increasing.



Children arriving at a drop-in centre

NewDawn India operates a sponsorship scheme and many of the children who live in the slums are sponsored. This gives them the opportunity to benefit from a well-rounded education. The support and encouragement that the children receive from their sponsors is invaluable to them as they battle the caste system and work to achieve academic or vocational qualifications. The children attach great importance to their sponsors and treasure all the cards and letters they receive from them.



Children enjoying a beach camp

The support of Vidiyal and NewDawn India extends into the slum itself, offering love, care and practical help to elderly people and the families of the children from Vidiyal.



Lunch for the elderly

Meetings with mothers are held to educate them about healthcare and to allow them to discuss any concerns. Meetings for fathers have also been introduced, as well as father and child camps, aimed at improving family bonds.

The work of Vidiyal is recognised by the Indian government, the police and agencies such as UNICEF for its work on the rights of children.

NewDawn India was founded in 1990

NewDawn India receives no government grants or financial assistance in either the UK or India.

NewDawn India and Vidiyal have no political affiliations and merely offer Christian love and care irrespective of race, caste or creed.

NewDawn India is a locally based Christian charity run entirely by volunteers, allowing all funds to benefit the children of Madurai.

Trustees and supporters are happy to give presentations to interested groups on the work in South India. Please contact 01473 311148.

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For the relief of Poverty in Southern India



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