

### *Little Pickpockets, May Their Tribe Increase*

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The Little Pickpockets, children from schools in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where People's Action For Rural Awakening has set up human rights clubs reached out to the children affected by the unprecedented December Floods in Chennai. They decided to pickpockets to make this possible. Only it was their own pockets that they picked to fill their hearts with the joy of giving. They put their pennies together and collected Rs.1,50,000.00 and sent their representatives to corporation schools in Chennai to tell that they care.

It was one of those regular meetings with students in Somidi Zilla Parishat School on the outskirts of Kazipet. Akansha, one of the students shared the story of how her classmate was not attending school for several days together. She said that she gathered some of her classmates and visited the girl's family and found out the reason why the girl was being absent: her mother had taken ill and needed her support at home! Akansha and her class mates did not just give her advise as to how important it was to be regular to school etc, but put their pocket money together and with the support of their human rights club guide Mr.Rajendar, who initially was sceptical about the human rights club initiative and who like other teachers now voluntarily mentors the human rights club members - collected around Rs.2500.00 to for their class mates medication.

After narrating this story the plight of children in Chennai came up for discussion and immediately they came up with the suggestion of raising funds for them. But they were requested not to raise funds from beyond their schools but only from students that too out of their pocket money. The call was sent out to all the schools in the human rights schools network in the two states.

The Little pickpockets collected Rs.1,50,000.00 which prompted all the staff of PARA too to contribute 10% of their salaries to the children's fund and the amount came to Rs.1,75,000.00. Three representatives of children with three teachers went to Chennai and were able to school uniforms to all the children in Corporation Chennai Middle School on Gujji street, books and study materials for students in Chennai Model School at Choolaimedu, three high end computers for Little Flower School for Hearing and Visually Impaired at Nungambakam.

Members of the human rights club constantly try to rewrite the old adage "Today's Children are Tomorrow's Citizens'. The motto is "Celebrate Differences, We are Today's Citizens and not Tomorrow's. These and other many such gestures add content to their slogan.