



Then



Now

TEENAGE GIRL OVERCOMES BONDED LABOUR

At six-years-old, Valli lived in debt bondage for four years along with her mother Geetha, alcoholic father Kumar, and four younger siblings. In 2013, Valli and her family were rescued. The family was finally free from bonded labour, but Valli's father found himself a slave to alcohol even after the release. Shortly after the birth of the family's sixth child, Nandhini, Valli's mother passed away.

Being the oldest of the children, Valli was forced to drop out of school to take on the responsibilities of both mother and father to her five younger siblings. Despite all her effort, Valli couldn't prevent two-year-old Nandhini from falling ill and being admitted to the hospital. She was diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition that the doctors termed as "one of the rare cases of this century".

While Valli and Nandhini's stay at the hospital was filled with challenges during Nandhini's treatment, the other siblings also continued to struggle at home for nearly a month. After extensive counselling, when Nandhini was discharged from the hospital, Kumar decided to enroll his children in a shelter home. Today, about two years later, they are all safe, happy and healthy. Valli is able to regain her childhood, continue her education and has now become a powerful spokesperson to voice out the injustice against children.

Valli's story is just one of many. Today, thousands of men, women, and children are trapped in the bonded labour system, abused and powerless, and unable to break free. But with collaborative support from the government and community, they too can have hope for their future.