

UN Day - Child Rights Denial Plays

Africa

(Scene begins, we see 2 police officers going through some files, the room that they are in has a table & a few chairs scattered around it. One of the officers sighs)

Officer 1- I've checked all the records, all 10 cases are the exact same, except this time the victim survived. (Checks his watch) It's time, go get the kid.

(The other officer nods & heads out to call the kid. Meanwhile, this officer proceeds to clean up the area a little bit. The kid along with the 2nd officer enters after the 1st has seated himself in a chair facing the table. The kid & the other officer also proceed to seat themselves. The kid appears to be of age 10-12, with torn clothes & several wounds)

Boy- Is it safe to talk

O1- Yes, of course. Now, tell me, what is going on here, why where you beaten up so brutally?

Boy- To tell you, I have to start at the very beginning. It all started because of education.

O1- Education? What's the problem with going to school & learning?

Boy- My village is one in which a few days after you were born, you would be made to work in the fields. I am the 1st in my village to receive education, a fact for which my parents had to fight tooth & nail for. (In the side, of the stage, a group of people would be yelling at 2 people with 1 person crying* If you want to make your son sit in a nice, comfortable chair in a big house & draw pictures all day long while we toil in the fields, then get out of here "Lighting is different there & the group moves away immediately after the above speaker's speech)

Boy- The area where the school & its surroundings are located in, is controlled by several gangs. If you aren't a part of 1 of these gangs, you have no protection, anything can happen to you. These gangs will force people to join them, either by getting them addicted to drugs or by threatening their families & other such unspeakable actions. The consequences of not joining a gang is what you see before you, death or at the very least, what happened to me. (We see in the side stage some boys beating up a person)

02- Kid, don't worry, we've posted men to protect you & your family from these assailants as long as possible, also we'll have chat with the village elders about all this, it isn't right to stop children from studying. You have nothing to fear.

Boy- Thank you so much

01- You can go now.

(The boy is escorted out by 02)

01(To himself)- What is this? People being beaten up, excommunicated, tortured, killed, Buildings being burnt? All this because 1 child goes to school. What has the world come to?
(shakes his head & leaves the room)

India

(We see the inside of a hut. In the top right corner, a small kitchen is seen, with a mud fireplace & a few utensils arranged next to it. In the top left we see a small hammock with some toys next to it. Below the kitchen sits a small puja room & below the hammock is the sleeping quarters, with mats & pillows serving as beds. On the wall hang some clothes & a school bag. We now see the occupants of the house. A woman is seen in the kitchen, busy cooking food. In the hammock, lies a small baby, which a girl seems to be playing with. An old couple sit near the puja room, busy chanting mantras. On one of the mats sits a solemn looking boy. A man enters the house. He appears to be very tired. He looks around & is startled at the sight of the boy. He walks over to the boy)

Ranjith- Rajesh? What happened? Why do you look so dejected?

Rajesh- (in a low voice) When I came home from school, Raja Anna tore all my books, saying that I won't be going to school from today. When I asked him why, He said that Patti had decided that I would work with him in the tea shop. He said that I had been a burden to the family by going to school.

Ranjith-(angry) (At the grandmother) what is this amma? I told you not to pull him out of school. What made you to commit such an atrocity?

Grandmother— Shut up you fool. Do you know how many atrocities we are facing? As it is we were struggling to send this little imp to that idiotic place & now after the wedding, we barely have enough money to feed ourselves! Enough is enough; we have wasted enough time & money on him. Let him pay off our debts by working in the tea shop. It is his duty to feed & clothe us & he has ignored it long enough. Time for him to fulfil his duties.

Ranjith- Amma please, you don't see how important it is for us to make him study. One day, all this hard work will bear fruitarian & we will reap the benefits. I will make him study, come what may. Come on Rajesh; let's go get you some new books. (He & the child exit the house while the grandmother & grandfather shake their heads at their son's supposed stupidity)

(12 years later)

(We once more see the inside of the police station in Africa. O1 enters talking on the phone)

O1- Hi amma, how are you? Fine, that's great, how's the new house? Nice, I knew you would like it. How's appa? Does he like the new TV? He loves it, super! Does Anna like the Honda city? He practically lives in it! Wow, super! What about Chutti Anirud, does he like the Ipad? He has downloaded how many games?! Paa! Does Riktha like her new phone? She is over the moon, awesome. How are Patti & Thatha? Are they enjoying the pilgrimage to badrinath? It's what they all ways wanted! samma! What have I been doing? Nothing much, just resolving some fights about education. Reminds me of old times. Ok bye, see you. I'll call later tonight, take care, bye! (Ends the call, smiles a little & leaves the room crying "Hey guys, want to go see a movie, my treat") (Narrator comes & says* This is a rare case, often, many students succumb to family pressure & quit schooling. This has to stop. If it does, every child in India could have a success story just like Rajesh. But right now, they have to settle for poverty ruled lives, lives where 10 rupees could mean the difference between life & death.)*