

Kinsu

Kinsu Kumar at 22 years old is an example of how extraordinary our children can become if given protection, care, freedom and opportunity. His journey from a child labourer to an aspiring Mechanical Engineer has been an inspiration. Born to a poor family in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh, his childhood was spent in the slums of Purikatra, Laldegi Mohalla where Kinsu's father eked out a meager living as a driver. His father was an inattentive parent, choosing to spend time with his friends instead of ensuring that Kinsu had a childhood and an education.

As Kinsu's family could not afford to send him to school, he was instead made to work at home; helping his mother in cooking, cleaning utensils and looking after his younger siblings. At the age of 6 he started working as a car cleaner and domestic help to contribute to the family's income.

His life reached a turning point when his father came in contact with Bachpan Bachao Andolan during the Education March organized by them in 2001. It was then that he realized his children could only have a future only through education. He decided to withdraw Kinsu from work and with BBA's help Kinsu was brought to Bal Ashram, where he was finally free to be a child.

At Bal Ashram, Kinsu showed a profound interest in his studies and an eagerness to learn. During his first six months in Bal Ashram he received non-formal education after which he was enrolled in the nearby school in class 4. Since then, Kinsu has never looked back. After passing his school exams with flying colours, he began to work on fulfilling his dream of becoming an engineer. His efforts bore fruit when he was accepted to the mechanical engineering course at Laxmi Devi Institute of Engineering and Technology in Alwar.

Throughout his journey, Kinsu's passion to protect child rights and the willpower to stop child labour has never waned, making him a global ambassador for the rights of children. In this role he has traveled all over the world, including the United States where he testified in a congressional hearing and the European Union where he spoke at a high level panel on education along with several world leaders including Gordon Brown and the President of World Bank. He also participated in The Hague Global Child Labor Conference as a Representative of the more than 60 million children who are forced to toil away their childhood for the greed of others.

Kinsu has been a part of many social movements promoting the rights of children, such as the Mukti Caravan, South Asian Anti Child Trafficking March 2007. He also spoke in the 2nd Global Conference on Child labour in Netherlands in 2010 (he was the only child speaker from around the globe).

He was invited as a child delegate to participate in the round table discussions during the historic first Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit in December, 2016 which was hosted by The Honorable President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. The summit brought together the Nobel Laureates and Global Leaders from across the world to call for protecting the rights of children. Kinsu is now one of 100 million youth leaders raising their voices for 100 million children who are still denied their right to a childhood.

He was also one of the leaders of the Bharat Yatra, led by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi. The Yatra, the largest youth mobilisation against child trafficking and child sexual abuse saw Kinsu speaking up for children who have been subjected to violence and abuse. He even got to meet Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan on the game show, Kaun Banega Crorepati.

Kinsu has even taken up the activist mantle in his college where he started an initiative called “*Jazbaa*”, which provides free tutorial classes for underprivileged children from nearby villages. With his friends, he conducted a door-to door survey in *Chikani*, a village near their college to find out how many children were enrolled in school. After seeing the dismal state of children in *Chikani*, they motivated parents to send their children to school and assuring them that they would be given free remedial help. Till today *Jazbaa* has helped 150 children across different villages.

Most of his vacations are spent in Bal Ashram which he’s taken to calling his second home. He keeps on lending his advice to other children and teaches them whenever he goes to the Ashram.

He is a keen writer and has started writing on Quora which is a question-and –answer site where he contributes by suggesting edits to answers that have been submitted by other users.