

## **Bhadram**

Bhadram was 14 years old when he was rescued. From Eravarm, a small village in Andhra Pradesh. Bhadram's father, a cattle grazer, died when he was five. His mother, also an agriculture worker, worked in paddy fields. The youngest of five brothers, Bhadram comes from a large family. His brothers worked in a sugar cane factory.

Bhadram's mother knew of a boy who had been sent to work in a sweet shop by a local named Reddy. Desperate to add to the family's meager income, she approached Reddy about sending Bhadram to work too. Bhadram was then taken out of school, where he had just completed a single year of formal education, and sent to work making sweets.

His routine at the sweet shop was gruelling, he would wake up at 4 A.M and work until 1 A.M for a pittance and then sleep on the floor of the shop. He would often be brutally beaten by the owner, to this day he still bears the scars of those beatings. This led to Bhadram running away from the shop and boarding a train to Rajasthan, without a ticket or any hope of restoring his childhood.

In Rajasthan, a shy Bhadram was brought to Bal Ashram, Bachpan Bachao Andolan's long term rehabilitation facility. Initially very reserved, Bhadram blossomed into an inquisitive and intelligent child as he settled into the Ashram. He began by learning some basic Hindi as the only language he knew was Tamil. Soon, he was excelling in his studies and had claimed Bal Ashram as his new home. Seeing the change that Bal Ashram brought into his own life and the lives of his fellow residents, Bhadram decided to become a social worker and work for the betterment of children everywhere.

Today, Bhadram is married, a father and a resident of the Bal Ashram where he helps other young boys with their journey from exploitation to freedom.