

## **PRESS NOTE**

Amaravati, February 22, 2025

### **Padmashri Prof. Shanti Sinha Discuss Child Labour and Child Rights in India at SRM University-AP's 20<sup>th</sup> University Distinguished Lecture**

*"Every Child Out of School is in Child Labour. Education, Education and Education alone is the Way Forward for a Progressing India." – Prof. Shanti Sinha*

SRM University-AP hosted the twentieth edition of the University Distinguished Lecture (UDL) by the eminent anti-child labour activist Padma Shri Prof. Shanta Sinha, Ramon Magsaysay Awardee, Former Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), and Professor (Retd.) Dept. of Political Science, Hyderabad Central University, as its keynote speaker. The session on the topic "Making Education a Reality and Ending Child Labour: Experience of M.V. Foundation" gave an overview of the work of M.V. Foundation in the field of child rights in India.

In a society ravaged by poverty, where children were forced to join the bonded labour workforce, Prof. Sinha remarked that it was not poverty that led to child labour but child labour that led to poverty. Prof. Sinha elucidated on the non-negotiable principle adopted by the M.V. Foundation, that 'no child must work, and every child must attend full-time formal day school,' which broke the societal norms of Indian society.

She briefly spoke about the impact that the M.V. Foundation had and the ripple it created in the field of child rights. *"M.V. Foundation has withdrawn over 15 lakh children in the age group of 5-14 years from child labour; stopped over 20,000 child marriages and pioneered a program for mainstreaming children to schools through residential bridge courses. The MVF's mission to abolish child labour also led to the Closure of Night Schools and the creation of necessary amendments in the Child Labour Act of 1986,"* stated Prof. Sinha.

The session also discussed Prof. Sinha's Journey at the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), and the various challenges faced in addressing key issues such as violation of children's rights in relation to child labour and child trafficking, rights of children in areas of civil unrest, juvenile justice system, corporal punishment, child abuse and violence on children, and child malnutrition.

The UDL 20 was a mind opener and a lens into the reality of child labour still prevalent in India. Prof. Manoj K Arora, Vice Chancellor of SRM University-AP, expressed his gratitude to have the presence of a torchbearer of social reform at the UDL. He stated, *"Prof. Sinha is a stalwart whose work has created a magnitudinal shift in the societal norm, significantly contributing to the abolition of child labour in India. We are grateful to imbibe from her knowledge and experience as a social leader."* Dean of Easwari School of Liberal Arts, Prof. Vishnupad, also expressed his heartfelt appreciation for Prof. Sinha's presence and her work. He stated that the thought-provoking and inspiring session will ignite students to think in a 'non-conventional' way and offer courage to make a change.

The 20<sup>th</sup> UDL was organised under the aegis of the Office of Dean-Research, the UDL committee, and the Easwari School of Liberal Arts. It witnessed the presence of Registrar Dr R Premkumar, Dean of the School of Engineering and Sciences, Prof C V Tomy, Dean of Research, Prof. Ranjit Thapa, and Faculty and students of the varsity. The signature lecture series is the university's flagship initiative to impart global exposure and quality education to its students.