

**MENCAFEP**  
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Mentally Handicapped Children & Families Educational Project

A Programme for Children / Young People with Learning Disabilities

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## Sharing Smiles

A SEMI ANNUAL PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS OF MENCAFEP

Number 18

I got married when I was 19 years old on the 11 of January 1973. My husband was 20 years old and he was employed at the Marketing Department. I am the eldest of 7 children in my family. When I got married my youngest sister was only 1 year old and the others were also of a young age. As the eldest in my family I had to look after my younger sisters and brothers, and I had to cope with their problems too.

As time passed by, I became the mother of 4 children. Now my eldest son is 26 years and my daughter is 24 years. The twins I had after them, are now 20 years old. One of them is Chamila and the other one is Sudu. Chamila is so called normal; Sudu is my special child.

After the birth of our twins, my husband lost his job. At that time we were not successful in our family life too, because of my husband's drinking problems, and his bad friends, made him lose everything. This was the stage when I was helpless and was unable to carry out my family life. I was so worried, that I had to rent out a room from my little house, to feed my children. Whatever difficulties I had and faced, I never had my children suffer or have any shortcoming. The scolding and the problems I faced with my husband did not stop me educating my children.

The hard times I had with Sudu was not known by her brother or sisters. Sudu's father, her sisters and brother have never felt sorry for her. They are not even willing to say that she is a family member. My own brothers and sisters, who are in good positions now, have washed their hands off me. They do not help me or even look at or acknowledge Sudu.

At present myself and my daughter Sudu are no more members of our family. The only people I have for my innocent Sudu and myself are at MENCAFEP. Their caring, loving staff cares for my Sudu and me.

Although I am not in very good health, I have no one left in this world to tell my sad story to. When days pass by, I don't know where Sudu's or my

future will be, which frightens me. All my lifetime I am unable to recall a day, where I was happy. **In my life experience, tomorrow is a day of more sorrow than today; I have no belief in a day that is unborn.**

My eldest daughter, who chose her own way in life, got married when she was only 16 years old. But I know, one day I will have to look after her children too. It does not stop there, my son too, chose his own way of life. It was another day I never slept and a day I almost went insane. Now he and his young wife are sharing my small house with me. This never solves our financial problems. With all these problems in my head and caring for Sudu, her twin sister too chose her own way of life as the two elder children did. Now I am a mother of no one, even if I cry loud there is no one to hear me.

I am unable to think if there is an unlucky mother in this world as me. There is no help from three of my children, how can Sudu help me? Although all these three children are married, they are facing financial problems. I have no way of thinking that my children will ever look after me.

Because of Sudu, I have left behind everything, and crying to her by telling her all my sorrows. If I leave this house what will happen to my 20-year-old profoundly handicapped daughter Sudu? I know she will die on her own bed, as she has no one in the family who cares for her. Even her father does not like to touch her.

Now I am fed up of my life, I don't think there will be a person in this world that can give me some love, care and money to survive. I still need to work to keep the house going and feed everyone.

Sudu was only seven years old when MENCAFEP staff came to see me. I remember the first day our Chris, an outsider, a person who was a total stranger to us. Proudly carried Sudu my daughter to the vehicle, I was proud that my daughter was going to school. I felt so happy that I could have shouted and cried for the whole world to hear me. Even my parents had no sympathy towards Sudu. Till this

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**MENCAFEP**  
Mentally Handicapped Children and Families Educational Project

26, St. Andrews Drive, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka.

E-mail : [mencafep@sltnet.lk](mailto:mencafep@sltnet.lk)

Tel/Fax : 0094-(0)52-2222509

A programme for children/young people with learning disabilities.  
The special child/young person has the right to live & be part of their community.

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