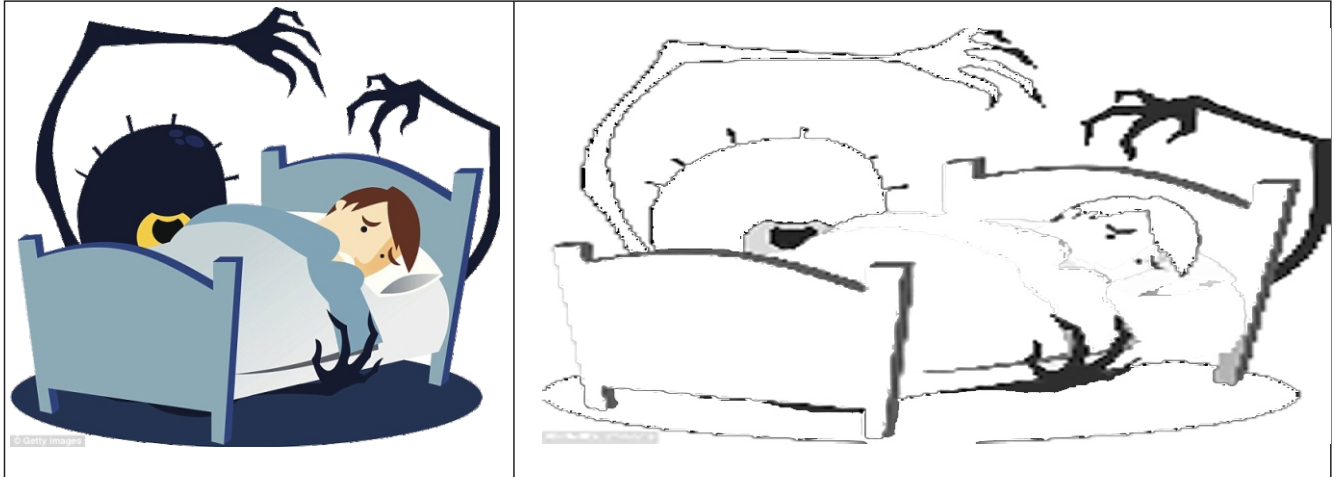


# A Dream Turned Nightmare

Age Group-7-10 Yrs



**M**ohan, a farmer with small landholding, found it difficult to run the household. His woes were multiplied as there were many mouths to feed. He had two sons and two daughters. Seeing his plight, his brother-in-law Harish, who was living in Delhi, asked him to send his children to him. He assured Mohan that he would get them enrolled in a school. Mohan could not refuse his brother-in-law.

Someone from Mohan's village in Odisha was going to Delhi, so Mohan requested him to take all of his children with him. He had to mortgage a piece of land for buying the railway tickets of his children. Children reached Delhi and Harish received them at the station.

On reaching Harish's home, the children took bath and were served with food of their choice. After that, they were given ice cream with small pieces of mango on it. They were enjoying every moment of their stay at uncle's home. In the next couple of days, they were taken by their uncle on a sight-seeing tour of Delhi. Mohan regularly called from Odisha, he talked to all his children. Listening to them, Mohan was happy and quite satisfied.

One morning, after a few days, Harish asked both the girls, to get ready as they would be taken to different homes. They would live there and would be admitted in a school. They were quite happy and accompanied him. When they reached different homes, they were greeted and asked to take rest. The next morning, in their respective houses, both of them were asked to sweep, mop, clean utensils and do the entire household work. When they asked about admission in school, they were beaten blue and black. Whenever they resisted regarding work or asked to go home, they were thrashed badly. This became routine. They were not paid single paise, neither were given sufficient food nor did they get good sleep. Both the girls

felt cheated when they came to know that Harish had taken hefty advance from their employers in lieu of their services.

On the other hand, Mohan's sons were sent to work in a motor garage in the walled city. Their work was to rummage through greasy motor spare parts, to fish out spark plugs, gear parts or shock absorbers from the scrap under scorching sun. Their 'ustad' used to abuse and even beat them when they failed to respond at once to him. In the night, they used to sleep in the garage, without any fan. They used to take bath in the open. Once, a social welfare official came to the garage for servicing of his car. He asked the boys whether they went to school. Seeing the official, talking to the boys, the owner or 'ustad' of the garage, pushed the boys away. He bluffed to the official that they studied in a school and had come to learn job skills during their summer vacations. After a while, seeing the 'ustad' busy with his work, one of the boys gathered strength and requested the official to come and meet them after 8 pm. The official accompanied by an NGO functionary came in the night, and listened to their heart-rending woes. The boys had been facing abuse, regular beating and were half-fed.

The official and NGO functionary got them released from the clutches of motor garage owner and then they went to Harish's house. From Harish, they got the addresses of the employers of the girls also. The NGO team contacted the girls, and they too were freed from their employers. The whole episode came out in the media. The Social Welfare department gave compensations to these children and arrangements were made for their return to their village. Feeling the pressure of media reports and public, Odisha Government assured all necessary help for the education of Mohan's children. Meanwhile, Harish and his men were arrested and sent to prison for their act.

When the children returned back accompanied by a Government official, Mohan came to know how he had been cheated by his brother-in-law. His son's wisdom and intelligence had helped to make all his children free. If Mohan had been careful enough to enquire about his brother-in-law before sending his children to him, this incident would have never happened.

**Moral:** Look before you Leap, the path may be steep.

### Questions:

- Q1. Why did Mohan want to send his children to Delhi to his brother-in-law?  
Q2. When the children reached Delhi at Uncle's home, how were they treated?

Q3.How were the boys and girls freed from the clutches of slavery?

Q4.What happened to Harish after the children were released?

Q5.What lesson did Mohan learn after his children reached home?

## Glossary

**Landholding** : Ownership of land

**Mortgage** : Putting some asset as security to borrow money or take a loan

**Rummage** : To search thoroughly by moving around or turning over

**Heart-rending** : Arousing deep sympathy