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**Minute for Mission**

**Restoring Dignity to India’s Most Oppressed**

While the economic and social status of women may be improving marginally worldwide, the life of the Dalit women in India remains unchanged. “Dalit” is a word from Sanskrit and Hindi that literally means oppressed or broken. Dalits are forbidden to draw water from the common well, from entering temples, are given the leftovers thrown away by the higher caste and are barred from the right to education.

Formerly known as “untouchables,” the Dalit women, who make up nearly 16% of the female population, face not only gender bias but also caste-based discrimination and economic injustice.

For Smitha Krishnan [crish-nun], this cruel existence was an everyday reality. A trained seamstress, Smitha was left as the sole provider for her family when her husband died just before India’s last tsunami. Not only did she lose her husband, but she also lost their thatched and mud house and everything in it — including her only means of making a living, her sewing machine.

“The destruction of my old sewing machine, which was my only source of income, and the death of my husband, leaving me with five kids to take care of, made life extremely tough for me and my kids,” she said.

Thanks to a grant to provide shelter and sewing machines among other essentials from [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](https://pda.pcusa.org/) (PDA) to the Society for National Integration through Rural Development, or SNIRD as it’s known, Smitha and her family face a more hopeful future.

SNIRD, a nongovernmental organization that has been instrumental in helping the people of India overcome natural and human-made disasters, has received support through Presbyterians’ gifts to [One Great Hour of Sharing](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/og300000/). Because of these generous gifts, thousands of people are able to cope with the impact of tsunamis, flooding and the Covid pandemic.

One Great Hour of Sharing’s purpose of helping neighbors in need around the world remains constant, giving us a tangible way to share God’s love — not only through the ministries of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, but also the [Presbyterian Hunger Program](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/) and [Self-Development of People](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/).

The collaboration between SNIRD and PDA seeks to dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty, both goals of the Matthew 25 invitation and challenge.

Smitha’s words tell the whole story.

“Because of people’s gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, we now live in a permanent and disaster-resistant shelter, my kids are back in school, I am able to feed and clothe them, and when they get sick, I am able to take care of their medication, too,” she said. “Thank you, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and SNIRD. And may the Lord continue to provide for those who continue to give to One Great Hour of Sharing.”

Please give what you can to One Great Hour of Sharing. When we all do a little — it adds up to a lot.

***Let us pray ~***

*Sheltering God, may our prayers and our gifts support those all around this world who have little and whose lives are impacted by floods, famines and disease. May we show your love in our gifts and in our lives.* **Amen***.*