



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Regional Office for
South Asia

JOURNEY OF HOPE



2011

“EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES”

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

PROSECUTION

**Prevention of
Human Trafficking and
Victim Support Initiatives**

Voices from the field...

UNODC Regional Office for South Asia

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A key element of UNODC's mandate under the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, is to improve the protection and assistance to survivors of human trafficking crimes.

The Protocol is the first important international legally binding instrument that defines trafficking in persons. UNODC has the mandate to assist countries in implementing an effective response to human trafficking, not only by ensuring that structures are in place to successfully prosecute and convict traffickers, but also by addressing the needs of the survivors of such crimes.

To this end, UNODC Regional Office for South Asia executed two projects on anti-human trafficking and victim support. The projects' aimed at building capacity of governments and NGOs to provide greater assistance to trafficking survivors with the aim of securing their legal and human rights and to reduce children's vulnerability to abuse and provide them with rehabilitation opportunities. In addition, the projects aimed to prevent trafficking especially in source areas by building and strengthening community structures, and were implemented in close collaboration with state governments and NGO partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the north Indian states of Jharkhand (Ranchi) and Bihar (Kishanganj), which experience large scale migration, some NGOs have been carrying out noteworthy interventions that aim to positively affect the lives of vulnerable women and children. The organization at Ranchi (Bhartiya Kisan Sangh) boasts of its mobile, aspirational young women by providing them opportunities for employment, while the NGO at Kishanganj (RAHAT) is making efforts to rescue trafficked women, keep them safe and somehow rehabilitate and repatriate them successfully. Low cost vocational options like goat-rearing and making bamboo products are some of the ways that women get trained. In southern India, the conditions and the responses differ, even between cities like Chennai, Calicut and Hyderabad. Here, technical support was provided to the state governments to better respond to the needs of women and children in vigilance and shelter homes.

This process of documentation involved a qualitative review of programme documents, and was more a primary, qualitative, in-depth documentation and recording of the interventions on-ground at 5 project locations in the northern and southern parts of India, viz. Ranchi (Jharkhand), Kishanganj (Bihar), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Calicut (Kerala) and Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).

While the respondents interviewed during this exercise were not quantitatively significant, the qualitative, in-depth discussions helped identify and record the planning and implementation of the programmes, the impact they have had on the beneficiaries, as well as recognizing that much still needs to be done. Many things are clearly visible through the interventions, like the empowerment that employment opportunities have given to the tribal women in Ranchi and the need for more advocacy with the community as well as with the local government departments is extremely essential for interventions to be sustainable.

“ Though the journey seems hard
And the road unknown
My eyes see not the rubble
My mind heeds not the hurdle
For in my mind’s eye
I see the distant shores
Of tomorrow
I see the risings
Of the castle built with the sand
That slips through my hands
I must walk on
Before the sands run out
Of my tightened grasp
I have not anything
But the dream I see each day
And fear losing if I stay still anymore
I must be the road
That winds its way to hope
I must be the road ”

Locations Visited



PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: AN OVERVIEW ON UNODC SOUTH ASIA'S WORK ON PREVENTION & PROTECTION

Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.





Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination.

Trafficking of women and children continues to be a significant problem in India, primarily for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour.

UNODC offers practical help to States, in not only helping to draft laws and create comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies but also assist with small resources to implement them. The adoption in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children marked a significant milestone in international efforts to stop the trade in people. UNODC is committed to bringing together all actors in society - governments, the media, NGOs (Non Government Organisations), etc in each affected country, to fulfill their common commitments to fight trafficking in human beings.

The work on anti human trafficking can be divided into three pillars:

Prevention of trafficking in persons

Protection of survivors of human trafficking

Prosecution of trafficking offenders

While all three terms are rather broad and may have different connotations and expressions, given the diversity of the issue, prevention can be said to include both **preventing a crime and reducing the conditions that make an individual vulnerable to trafficking**. Thus, all prevention related activities are designed and implemented keeping in mind the basic principles of crime prevention such as inclusion, empowerment and risk reduction. It recognizes that human trafficking and migration are the result of human vulnerability. The allure of opportunity, the relentless demand for inexpensive goods and services and the expectation of reliable income in a place where employment opportunities are limited, either in real or perceived terms, drive people into potentially dangerous situations where they are at risk of being exploited.

Prevention activities take many forms; through public awareness and education, reflecting a need to inform the public, including individuals who are potentially at risk of the dangers of being trafficked. This is done through various Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and other Information Education Communication (IEC) materials being developed and distributed by UNODC among the partner NGOs in the geographical areas of intervention, for further dissemination and awareness among the larger population. Prevention is also done through data collection and research in order to understand both the scope as well as the nature of trafficking in the affected areas. The third form of prevention involves the development of social and economic interventions related to human trafficking, reflecting the need to generate alternatives for those potentially at risk of being trafficked. Successful prevention activities addressing root causes include job skills training programmes to promote local employment opportunities; empowerment programmes to develop children's self-confidence, nurture realistic expectations for their futures, and assist them in developing successful career plans; community enrichment programmes to enliven community life and discourage out-migration; and crisis intervention programmes to provide durable, local solutions for women and children in abusive homes or facing other crises that might otherwise push them to migrate.

Recovery for trafficked persons is a long and complex process. A core element of UNODC's mandate under the UN Trafficking Protocol is to increase the level of protection and assistance provided to survivors of human trafficking crimes (Articles 2(b), 6, 7 and 8). Once the trafficked or migrated person is rescued, care needs to be taken for the protection of the man, woman or child, during their stay in the shelter home/vigilance home, before reintegrating them into the society. Sometimes, this re-integration may not be the right answer, since it may place them back into the same scenario from which s/he had tried to escape earlier, continuing their earlier vulnerability. Thus, **Protection** activities require guidelines to be followed for the protection of women and children, trying to enhance their life skills, re-building their emotional structures, providing them with some basic skills with which to eke out a survival once they are out in the world again. Police and criminal justice staff need standard working procedures to guarantee the physical safety of victims, protect their privacy and make it safe for them to testify against their abusers. Protection involves ensuring, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, that safe and adequate shelter that meets the needs of trafficked persons is made available, that trafficked persons are given access to primary health care and counseling, providing them with legal and other assistance, ensuring that they are effectively protected from harm, threats or intimidation. In **Prosecution**, much of UNODC's work centres on strengthening criminal justice systems. It helps countries to develop effective law enforcement and criminal justice institutions and has assisted many countries in developing legislation to combat trafficking in persons, effectively.

While UNODC assists states on all three areas, this document will concentrate on some of the UNODC assisted interventions in Prevention of human trafficking and Protection of survivors of trafficking.

Awareness-raising, education and employment programmes

In **Ranchi, Jharkhand**, where the majority of the population is tribal, the women seek and work, to aspire to break through all boundaries. With a literacy rate of nearly 39%, the women of this state want to travel to bigger cities and seek better lives for themselves. However, social ostracisation of girls who come back after having ‘run off’ to big cities keeps some of them within the

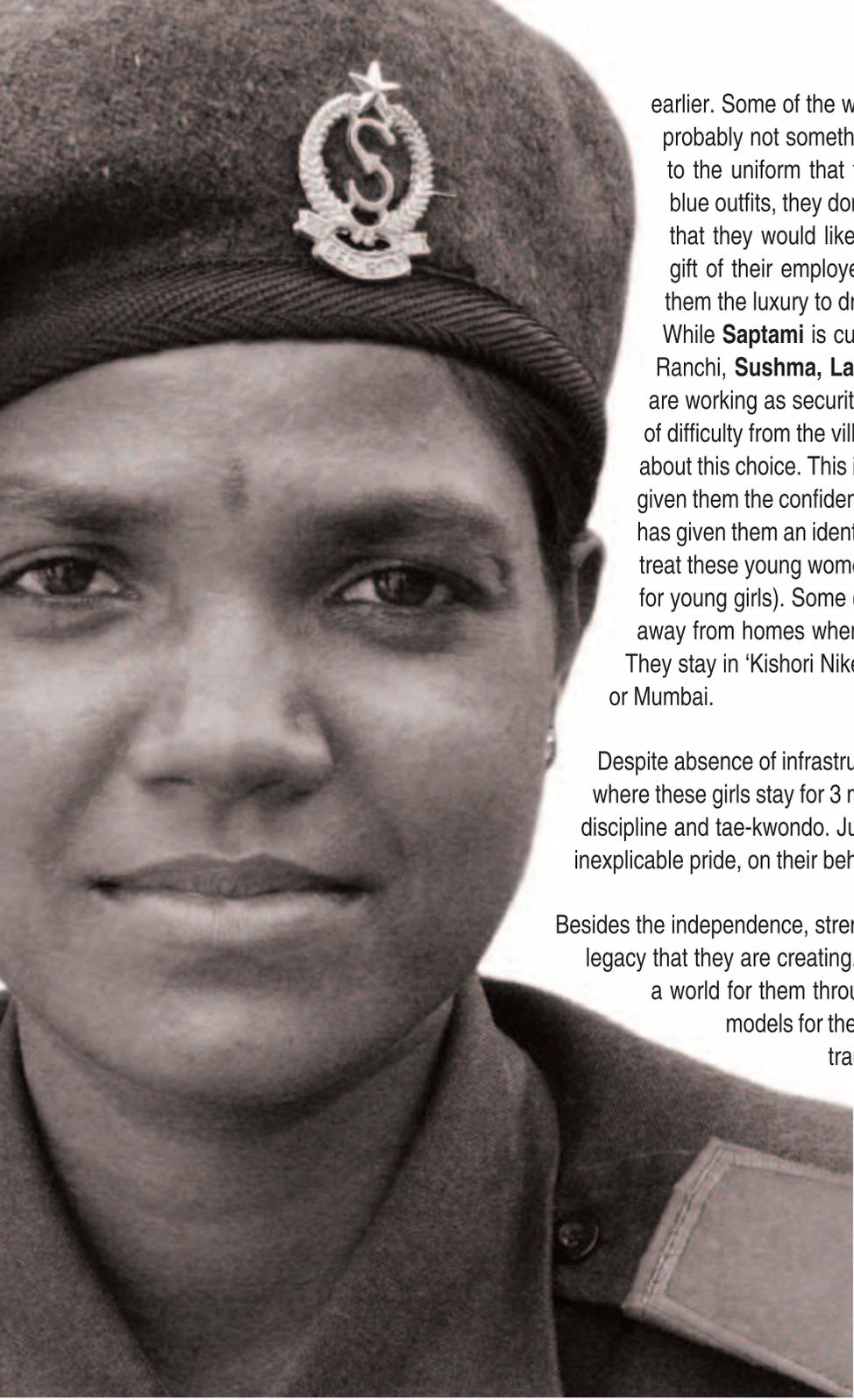
social boundaries prescribed and they try to seek work at the nearby stone quarry or building of a nearby road. But they never stop dreaming and their dream filled eyes keep seeking out some route, some helpful uncle or village ‘brother’ who promises them an escape to a bigger city with bigger and better prospects. And that is when they fall prey to their own aspirations. Allegedly, of all the girls who have migrated from the villages that surround Ranchi, only 10% ever come back and the rest are lost in the anonymity of big cities, in the clutches of the hundreds of ‘placement agencies’ functioning in these cities.

PREVENTION – Empowering communities to combat human trafficking through local resources

Recognizing this vulnerability, of economic limitations coupled with undying aspirations, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), with support from UNODC, hit upon a unique idea that worked for the physically strong and mentally ambitious young girls of Ranchi. The area of focus was to provide vocational training to vulnerable young women, who are primarily from tribal communities, in order to strengthen their capacities to secure their livelihood.

Using community networks and resources, BKS identifies young girls who might be expressing, one time too many, their desire to work or to go to a different place. Once these girls are identified, they are approached by a trusted member of the village, who then invites the girls to enroll for training sessions, either for housekeeping or for training as a security guard. BKS runs an agency that trains and places these girls in hotels, state houses, corporate houses, in Ranchi and in Delhi, as security guards and housekeeping staff. Sometimes the young women respond to newspaper advertisements. The NGO (BKS) tries to ensure that information about these trainings reaches these girls and those interested apply. The State Coordinator – Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC) Jharkhand and Director, BKS, advocates with various corporate houses, hotels, as well as with the local administration to come on board this programme as partners, to provide employment to these girls after their training. After application, all those who select housekeeping are trained by a staff member from one of the numerous hotels who have agreed to be a part of this programme, in the art of hospitality and graciousness while serving in an extremely demanding service industry. These trainings make them adept at house-keeping, cleaning, serving, at saying “Good Morning, Ma’am!” in that extra smart way, thus equipping them even for their lives ahead. **Balmani** (one of the trained women) feels that she would eventually want to marry, though right now she is happy that she can support her mother’s medical treatment, something that she could not have thought of doing





earlier. Some of the women trained as security guards expressed that housekeeping is probably not something that they would like to pursue, since there is a pride attached to the uniform that they wear as security guards. Smart and confident in their navy blue outfits, they don't even blink when speaking about how marriage is not something that they would like to consider any time soon. There is a new found confidence, a gift of their employed status, a security born out of financial independence, allowing them the luxury to dream. They now have their eyes set on higher, bigger, better goals. While **Saptami** is currently happy working as a security guard in a well known hotel in Ranchi, **Sushma, Lacchmi and Priya**, all three from villages neighboring Ranchi, who are working as security guards in the Jharkhand Bhawan (State House) in Delhi, do realize that their families would be facing a lot of difficulty from the village people due to their choice of working in Delhi, but they do not show any signs of apprehension or doubts about this choice. This is what their training has done for these women. Besides making them physically more sure and strong, it has given them the confidence to look at the world differently, to see the narrow mindedness of the village they come from, for what it is. It has given them an identity that allows them to hold their own in the face of employers and strangers alike. Young girls back in Ranchi, treat these young women as role models. These young girls are survivors of trafficking, and help run 'Kishori Niketan' (shelter home for young girls). Some of them have been rescued with the help of the police in cities of Delhi and Mumbai, some of them have run away from homes where they were abused while working there, as a result of being sold by fraud by some village 'brother-in-law'. They stay in 'Kishori Niketan', study in the bridge schools also run by BKS, and swear that they will never go to any big city like Delhi or Mumbai.



Despite absence of infrastructure of its own, BKS has locally advocated to procure a single large room in the Agricultural Training Centre, where these girls stay for 3 months, and learn to read, write a little in English and go through rigorous army-like training in marching, drills, discipline and tae-kwondo. Just watching them go through their drills, raising their arms and legs high above the ground, fills one with an inexplicable pride, on their behalf, for having taken life in their own hands, shaping it the way they want to, taking it where they want it to go.

Besides the independence, strength and confidence that these women have received from this intervention, attention needs to be paid to the legacy that they are creating. These smart young women, standing in dark blue track-pants and white t-shirts or that teacher, who opens a world for them through education, or that *didi* (sister) who is sending money home by working in a hotel in Ranchi, are all role models for the little girls in the 'Kishori Niketan'. Despite their experiences, or even for those who have not been through any traumatic experience, these women represent hope. Looking at them, they can believe in their potential and life's possibilities. Confident of being able to achieve anything, these women want to join the police force, the paramilitary forces. They are impatient with any expression of inability. They are ready to work harder, to run around and make the effort, but they do not want to be told that this is the end of what they can achieve because from their standpoint, the horizon is endless...

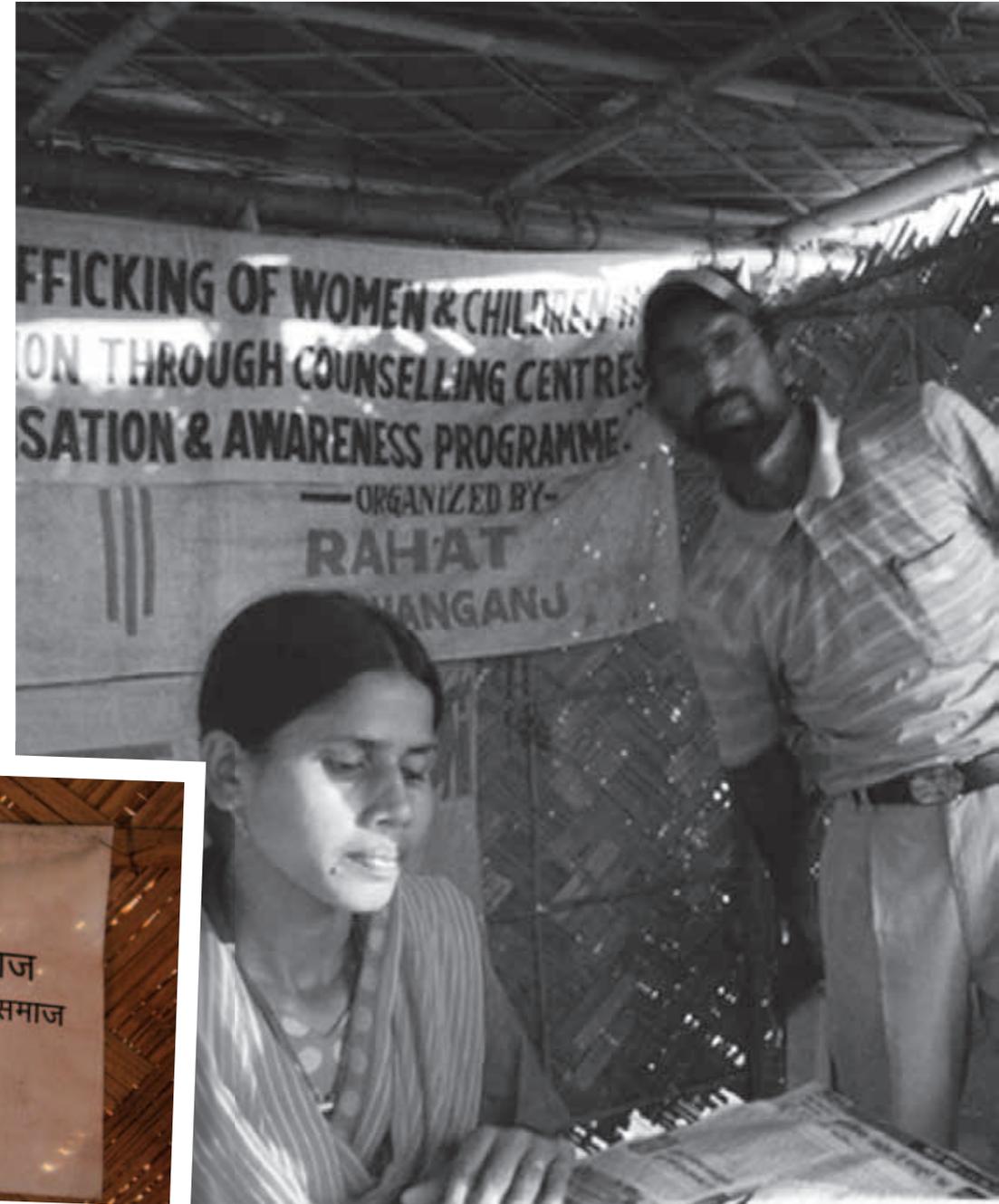
Local advocacy and resource mobilization for protection within community

Swawalambi bano, swabhiman se jiyo! – BKS Motto

(Become Self Sufficient. Live with Self-Respect)



In **Kishanganj, Bihar**, the scenario is unique and challenging. Here, trafficking of women poses a bigger problem than migration dominated Jharkhand. In Kishanganj, where female literacy rate is approximately 18%, there is evidence of a large amount of trafficking of women from all over India, as well as from and to Bangladesh and Nepal, both of which have their borders near Kishanganj. Kishanganj falls on the main National Highway, which starts from either of these two borders and reaches out into the entire country. Each bus, each train, each vehicle passing on the main highway of Kishanganj could potentially be carrying women to and from the borders to the interiors of the country, lost in the labyrinths of India, to the vagaries of trafficking. As one stands at the bus stop, watching the scores of buses carrying people to known and unknown lives, one suddenly feels as if each woman there is a potential victim, being taken further away from her home. Women are brought to Kishanganj from all over India, like Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Patna (Bihar), etc. These women are moved frequently from place to place to disable any attempts at tracking them. The Rapid Action for Human Advancement Tradition (RAHAT), with support from UNODC has been broadly used to strengthen community networks as sources of information and avenues of preventing trafficking of women. Trafficking is more covert in its operation, making it difficult to identify and stop. Hence, building community networks and using the community as a warning call, has worked brilliantly as a project implemented by RAHAT. UNODC assistance was used to setup, equip and run RAHAT Counseling Centres at key nodal points such as the main bus stop in Kishanganj and opposite the bus stop near the Nepal border. The staff at the counseling centers is trained to keep vigilant “lookout” for anything suspicious. They watch out for unlikely couples, for women who are with men they do not seem to be familiar or comfortable with. They walk among the crowds, listen in to snatches of conversation, strike conversations with strangers, in order to ascertain





the credibility of the people traveling together. Where they are suspicious, they invite the people, cordially, back to their counseling centres and engage them in conversation, all the while trying to glean more and more information. Any discrepancy in the facts between those traveling together, they inform the nearest police station. Bus drivers, conductors, and others that play their role in the travel industry of Kishanganj, are engaged with as partners in preventing this crime from taking place and they in turn assist by keeping a look out for any likely victims and inform the staff at the counseling centres of anyone they might suspect.

In the areas visited during the documentation, it was found that the girls, who are kept in the red light areas of a place like Kishanganj, are usually from far off places like Lucknow and Gorakhpur. They are taken from one place to the other, to wipe out any trace of their route. They are taken through a circuitous route, sometimes going via Bangalore (Karnataka), from Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), then Sitamarhi (Bihar), etc before they end up in Kishanganj, from where, they could be sent to Nepal or Bangladesh, or they might become a part of the local sex industry of Kishanganj. The RAHAT staff has experienced great danger and difficulty in rescuing and then safeguarding the girls they have rescued from the surrounding red light areas. An interesting incident that the staff of RAHAT talk about, was when the counseling centre, which also functions as an information point, where people can anonymously provide or seek information connected to trafficking, a chit of paper was put in by a sympathetic *Sashastra Seema Bal* (Border Security Force) soldier. A visitor to the red light area, he happened to meet Shikha, one of the girls in that brothel, who expressed a desire to escape. His sympathetic note in the counseling centre information box provided RAHAT the much needed opportunity to seek the help of the police and conduct a raid on that brothel that saved **Shikha** as well as **Sushma**, a 19 year old mother of a 9 month old Jhanvi, born in the brothel. Shikha, from Lucknow and Sushma from Gorakhpur, look healthy and safe in the Short Stay Home run by RAHAT, but they and the RAHAT staff remember how people hounded them for days, pretending to be from the media, etc, wanting to take the girls back. Similar was the case when RAHAT had rescued a young Nepali girl. During the time that it took to locate her real home and send her back, the RAHAT staff were on tenterhooks due to the threat from the vultures that hovered around the short stay home for the duration that she was there.



Strengthening community protection structures to address human trafficking

In Kishanganj, Bihar 72 Community Vigilance Committees are the ears and eyes in the villages. Tarannum (a staff at RAHAT) recalls a time when Chandni, a girl of 14 years, was going to be married off to a 45 year old man from Haryana (a state in northern India), a stranger who came into the village, unknown to all, and planned to marry Chandni in two



An orphan, with a little brother to worry about, Chandni was willing to have her life traded off for an unknown fate, as she thought this would be a way out for her ailing uncle, little realizing that spending her life married to an unknown man, as she thought she would be doing, was not the least of what awaited her. It was the Community Vigilance Committee, trained and positioned by the NGO RAHAT, that got news of the marriage through one of their members and reaching the site, they were able to save Chandni. Today, when she knows what could have happened to her life, you can see the fear on her face.

However, her travails are the same. While RAHAT could save her and ensure the imprisonment of the man, it does not have the resources to promise Chandni an assurance of a better life, where she can address all her problems. Regular advocacy with the local administration and proof of good work over a period of time, has got RAHAT the recognition and the opportunity to be able to procure a meager amount of financial assistance for Chandni as well as the support of people like the District Magistrate (a government official who is the Head of District Administration) and the Deputy Superintendent of Police, who extended all help possible. However, how long would that go in supporting a girl who works in other people's houses, so as to not be a burden on her uncle? Regular schooling for both her and her brother, along with vocational training, which also pays her a minimum stipend for the time being to pay



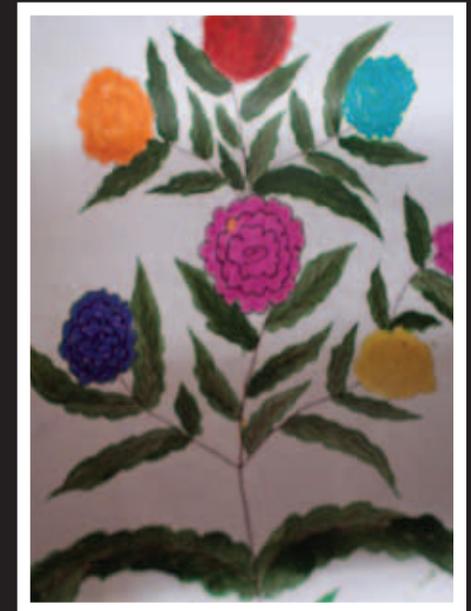


for her and her brother's care, training for better employment avenues for the future – these are real strategies required to address the future of these girls who are rescued at great peril by the staff of RAHAT. Voluntarily choosing to do this Herculean task requires a commitment and dedication that is difficult to encounter on a regular basis. The project support enabled RAHAT to take information, education and awareness of the issue to the people and the communities at large. Most times they are listened to, with rapt attention. This reinforces their belief that they are doing the right thing, though many a times those guilty of perpetrating this crime, within the community, have tried to slander their name. The registers and records of RAHAT tell their own tales of the organization and its staff's endeavor to do everything possible to ensure the safety of the women that come into their shelter home and those that leave the home with their families, starting from maintaining a file on each woman who has ever come in contact with RAHAT, to conducting an entire public ceremony of handing over the woman to the family, to making the family sign an 'Oath' whereby they mutually promise not to fight, not to leave home, not to exploit and so on. Sometimes the families accuse the RAHAT staff of wrong doings and sometimes the family is grateful. The staff at RAHAT struggles through layers of lies, deceit, anger, but they don't give up the struggle!

However, this is not the biggest problem that RAHAT faces. Once saved from the brothels, these women, more often than not, cannot go back to their villages as they are sure of being ostracized. However, no financial security exposes them to the danger of being either pulled in or being pushed back into the same situation. However, beyond the short term courses of a beautician or that of stitching, etc, RAHAT cannot promise bigger or better employment avenues. This leaves the circle incomplete. RAHAT also facilitates bamboo making by community women, as well as goat-rearing, so that women feel some level of economic independence. However, more resources could go into providing full time training in vocational courses to women that are rescued by RAHAT, as well as provide a regular channel for the products made by these women to reach the markets where they would be able to get some return for their labor. RAHAT advocates actively with the local administration as well as with the paramilitary forces, BSF (Border Security Force) and the SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), as a result of which there is complete cooperation from them. However, greater resources need to be provided to have the forces involve themselves more actively, through providing training to the women, providing them with employment opportunities at the local level and so on. There is a great need to empower these women. Rescue is just part of the solution. Rehabilitation and revitalization need resources, to enable any programme to truly empower the women who are trafficked.

PROMOTING MINIMUM STANDARDS OF CARE AND PROTECTION

After the visit in the North, the south of India presented new dilemmas, new scenarios and new responses. In the south, the documentation covered the work being supported by UNODC in collaboration with the state governments of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, mostly in the area of protection of survivors of trafficking. Vigilance Homes for women rescued from commercial sex work, children in shelter homes rescued from the streets, from workplaces, children in conflict with the law presented a canvas with myriad colors.



Improved victim care through counseling and training in government run homes for women and children

Chennai – Looking deep within, into the strength that is me

In Chennai, the Department of Social Defence, Government of Tamil Nadu is involved in efforts in Rescue and Rehabilitation of women who are rescued by the police under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. Unlike the women of Kishanganj, who might have been victims of deceit, sold off from hand to hand, the women in the vigilance home in Mylapore, are rescued commercial sex workers, most of them pushed into this as victims of their poverty and helplessness. These women were rescued by the police and put into judicial care, awaiting the court's decision to rehabilitate them. Duration this period, these women, many of who have landed up in Chennai from places as far away as Bangladesh, Nepal, Manipur etc , are put into vigilance homes. In Tamil Nadu, there are 5 such Protection/Vigilance Homes – in Chennai, Salem, Madurai, Trichy and Coimbatore. The vigilance home in Mylapore, Chennai, houses approximately 80 women in a green campus.

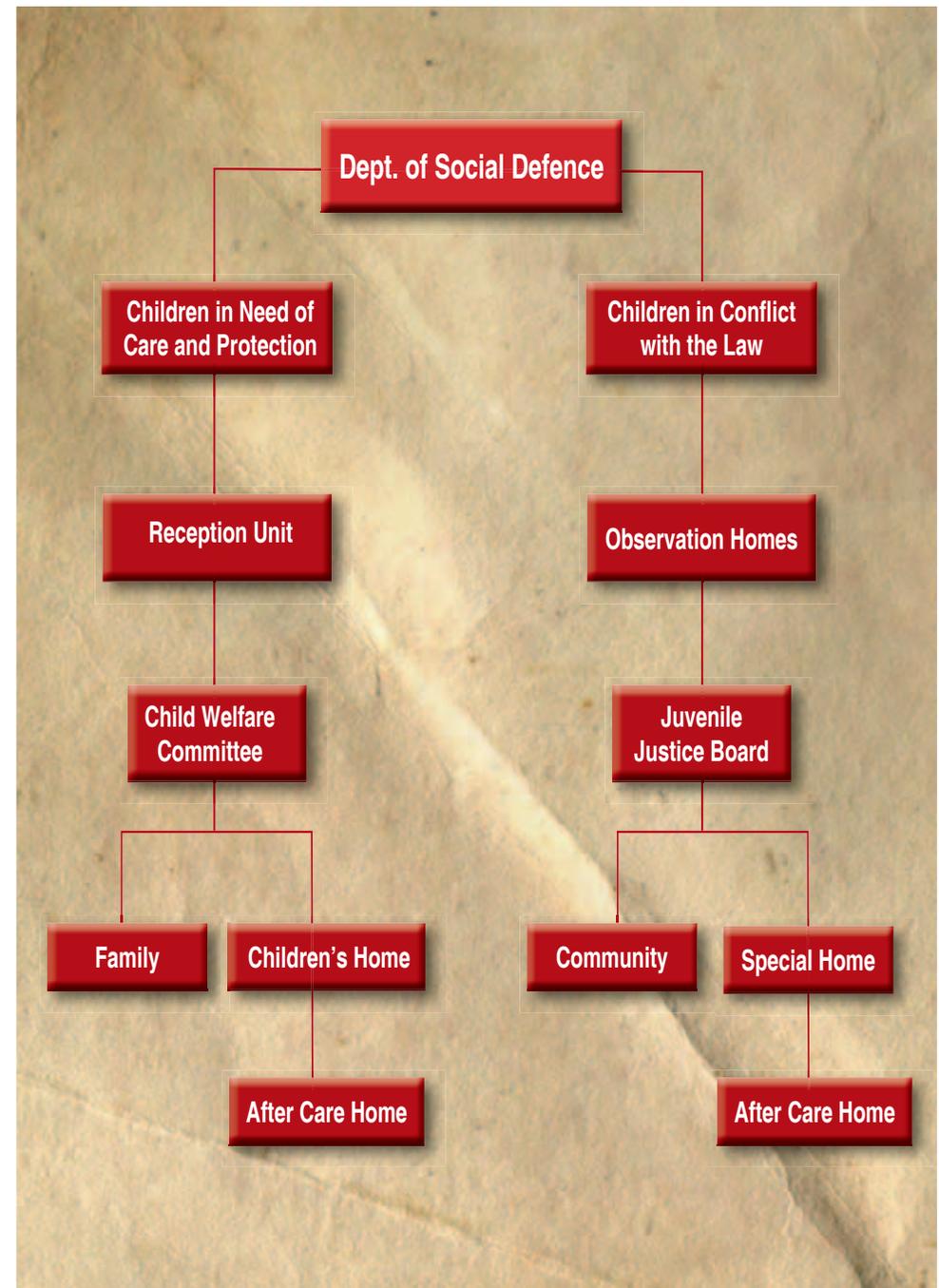


As divergent as the states that they hail from, are the stories that they have to tell about their journeys till Chennai and to the vigilance home. Seen as victims by the law, rather than as offenders, these women await their freedom, with the impatience borne of captivity. History of abuse and cruelty, entry into commercial sex work, sometimes due to force, sometimes due to convenience, rescued by the police and now staying in the vigilance home, they remember their families, their little children and their aged parents, worry about how their families might be making their ends meet, in the absence of the income that they were bringing in. Frustrations lead to quarrels among the residents as well as with the care givers. While ideally speaking the women should have been able to get out within a period of 3-6 months, some have been there for almost a year and a half. Ms. Asha Kannan, Superintendent of the vigilance home in Mylapore has tales of how women residents have tried to escape by physically attacking some of the staff and even the security guard at the gate and how one of the residents has tried to take her own life three times. Unlike the women in Kishanganj, most of the women in this vigilance home did not volunteer to be rescued. Some of them feel that the police rescue operations infringed on their freedom and their ability to support their families. They are married, most of them, with children. There are women who entered commercial sex work to pay off their husbands' loans, which their husbands could not afford to pay back. There are women whose fathers, uncles, brothers sent them off with unknown people to enter this trade and earn money. Then there are some who were about to be initiated into sex work and were rescued just before it happened. So, they stay in this vigilance home, with no idea why they are there or for how long they would stay.

Absence of a professional psychiatrist, is a complaint shared by many of the counselors present there, who are untrained in this specialized counseling and do the best that they can, from their experience and instinct. However, the presence of the counselors provides the residents of the vigilance home some comfort. They find a patient ear, a soothing hand of these counselors in times when anxieties override everything else. Some of the frustration is released during the Life Enrichment Sessions. These sessions are conducted by the Maithri Educational and Charitable Trust, run by Mr. R. Sreedhar.

With these adult women, the going is tough because their cynicism and bitterness impedes the release of their energies into too much creativity, a sure route for healing in children who are victims of trafficking. The Social Defence Department, takes care of two categories of children - those who are in need for care and protection and

those who are in conflict with the law. The first category comprises of children who are run-aways, destitute children, orphans, etc. The Juvenile Justice Act recognizes that the children in both these categories need care, regulation and a healthy environment for development. In the absence of which, some children end up becoming offenders in the eyes of law. However, keeping their age in mind, the law recognizes that they have the potential to be corrected, if treated with care, affection and provided with a safe, regularized and healthy environment. Hence, children in need of care and protection are brought into the Reception Units. Their cases are reviewed by the Child Welfare Committee whose first preference is to place the child again with the family after counseling the child and the family members. In case the Board feels that the child is unwilling to go back or that the conditions prevailing in the family will further suppress the child's potential, the child is then sent to a Children's Home. Children in the Reception Unit are discharged from there on the orders of the Child Welfare Committee. The Child Welfare Committee may order that the child be restored to the care of parents or relatives or the child shall be shifted to the regular unit of the Children's Home for further developmental activities of the child. In case the child belongs to some other state, then s/he is transferred to the Child Welfare Committee of that state for further decision. Children in conflict with the law are brought into Observation Homes, while waiting for the decision by the Juvenile Justice Board. No child other than a child in conflict with the law is admitted in the Observation Home under any circumstances. The Juvenile Justice board decides whether the child can be sent back to the community or whether s/he needs more supervision and observation. In which case, the child is sent to a Special Home. The Juvenile Justice Board can also refuse bail to the child in conflict with law if it feels that the release is against the best interest of the child. The Special Home is mandated for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of children in conflict with law who have been directed to undergo institutional training for their activities against law, to provide opportunities to receive emotional and psychological support, to facilitate the child to receive proper health care, education, vocational training, behavior modification programmes etc., to assist the child for development and growth and to prepare the child for re-integration within the community as a changed person. After Care Homes have been established to provide Care and Protection to the discharged children from Special Homes or Children's Home to receive shelter facilities not exceeding three years. Here, children are kept till the age of 21 years, or 23 years, depending on the State ruling, and are provided vocational training, to obtain specialized training to improve their skill in particular job oriented training programmes, for empowerment, skill development and to facilitate employment. All the homes provide facilities for formal education from 1st to 10th standard and non-formal education, facilities for sports and other extra curricular activities, facilities for creative learning, participatory programmes in seminars, literary works, cultural programmes, and facilities for professional assistance by psychologist, social workers/counsellors etc., for behaviour modification.



Chennai – Rewriting the rule of the game of life

In **Chennai**, one of the successful interventions resulting out of UNODC support has been the use of sports for personality development and inculcating positive values among children. The department recognized that the energy of the children needed to be channelized constructively and that some children were better at sports than at other creative expressions. Some of the children in the shelter homes want to go back home, but can't, while some of the children do not want to go back home and to the same conditions that they ran away from. In order to channelize their young energies and put it to good use, the department advocated with the Sports Development Authority (SDA), Chennai and organized a 1 month stay at the SDA, Chennai complex, where select children, who showed a positive bent and interest towards sports, stayed and were trained in sports, creative arts, etc. UNODC support enabled their boarding and lodging in the premises and they learnt the values of discipline, cooperation, team building, and were engaged in energetic sports. This camp resulted in a Sports Meet, held after a long gap of 20 years, where almost 200 children from Children's Homes across the state participated in sports events, before the Principal Secretary (Head of bureaucracy of a department in a state government) of Sports and Youth Development to the Government of Tamil Nadu. The department has now linked up with the district sports authorities in various districts and now the children, who earlier did not have any opportunity for building a sense of self can proudly lay claim to being invited to various sports events being held at district levels. These opportunities, along with other donor funded activities such as dancing, playing of instruments, theatre workshops, etc have opened up a new world to these children, who earlier only knew a life of struggle and escape. Programme funders might be varied, but as far as the children are concerned, it all comes together in the children being able to spend time dancing and playing music instruments made of coconut shells and other instruments and learning dance steps, painting pictures bright colors which now adorn the walls of the Home, making decorative items out of waste paper, learning how to use computers, staying in clean places, in sleeping with full tummies and with a peaceful mind that they are safe.



Calicut – Scripting their own future on the stage of life

The Government Social Welfare Complex in Calicut (Kerala) is housed in a sprawling campus of greenery and protection. The complex houses 1 Girls' home, 1 Boys' home, 1 After Care home, 1 Mahila Mandir - Home for destitute women, 2 Observation Homes, and 1 Asha Bhawan – Home for mentally ill men above 18 years of age, who have been treated, but are not accepted by their families. The Girls' and Boys' Homes see children from all over the country, who are abused, neglected and exploited. Mr. Rajan, former Superintendent of the Boys' Home says that 20% of the children in the Homes were from other states and usually children from other states are handed over to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of the relevant state for them to decide about the child. But the problem arises due to the paper work involved, the long time lags that occur and also due to lack of correct information many times. Sometimes the other CWC do not want the children back. And unless the CWC decides the fate of the child, the Homes cannot begin any constructive, regulated day cycle for the child. There is also a problem once the child is released, since there is no follow up mechanisms for the released child. Little Ashok (name changed) has ended up here from Maharashtra. Having lost his parents, he felt scared for his life from his uncles and ran away from home. He worked in various *dhabas* (road side eateries), in various places including Calicut, before the Police rescued him. He is certain he does not want to go back home and here, in the Children's Home, he harbors dreams of learning how to dance, so that he can become the next Mithun Chakraborty (famous Bollywood actor)! Some have come here by traveling from far off places, some because their single mother could not afford to keep them. Their stories are numerous but each has left behind scars of betrayal, fear and suspicion. Some of these children are sent to residential schools, where they stay and study and only come back to the Home during holidays. They are sent to these regular schools, to remove the stigma that society attaches to Institutionalized children. However, while children who were staying in the Children's Home were sent to regular school, it was felt that more is needed to be done to boost their self confidence and to improve their social skills through interaction with other children. While in Chennai the same was achieved effectively through the UNODC facilitated Sports Camp, Mr. Rajan said that in Calicut, theatre was used effectively as a tool for self expression and socialization. In a camp organized with UNODC support, the Government Juvenile Home, Vellimadukunnu, Kozhikkode (another name for Calicut) invited various personalities from the fields of theatre, dance, arts, music, who worked with the children for 60 days. Select children, chosen with an eye towards their interest, inclination towards theatre and also keeping in mind their educational status and requirement, were chosen for this workshop. As a result of this, 45 children experienced the thrill of performing a drama and dance programme before an invited audience of ministers, the press and so on, at Trivandrum on May 20, 2009 and then again on January 30, 2010, as part of the Kerala Juvenile festival. The same programme has been rolled out in 3 select institutions in Trichur, Kochi and Trivandrum (cities of Kerala) and the children performed in Trichur on May 29, 2010. The group of children, who are now a recognized theatre group, performed before a large audience comprising of teachers, members of the press, Theatre Academies and others.

The projects also help in setting up computer-training programmes in Calicut Children's Home and After Care Home and has facilitated the setting up of a computer lab with 5 machines, enabling a total of 25 boys and girls a peek into the digital world. Education is compulsory here till the age of 14, and so the children are given computer training to enable them to work on DTP work, TALLY work, etc. After the age of compulsory education, incase the child is not interested in studying s/he is introduced to some vocational course like tailoring for girls, while the boys are taught agriculture.





Livelihoods training and support to survivors of trafficking

Chennai – Arming for a better tomorrow

The intervention at the vigilance home, Mylapore, Chennai includes equipping the resident women with skills of livelihood. Radhika, Coordinator Operations at Action Et Aide, an NGO that is running the vocational training programmes at the vigilance home, facilitated by UNODC support, says that the training is provided to each woman after studying the area that she would most likely go back to, so that she can be trained in an employment avenue that she would find easy to find employment in. Hence, doing this intervention everyday, for four months, for a fluid population of 45 women, since they keep coming and going from the home, has meant that they have had to study each woman and her destination area in great detail, to arrive at a decision regarding which skill she would benefit from being trained in. At the same time, the areas of skill upgradation have been decided keeping in mind the demands of the market. These women are usually rescued commercial sex workers and hence, she admits that before her team went in to train the women, they themselves went through a session in order to correct their attitudes, since they had never had an experience of interacting with such a group before. These trainers also had to be continuously encouraged since initially the women in the Home were disinterested and their initial reactions was to not sit properly or show any interest while the training session would be on. They would be disinterested, detached or just walk out of the class. They would not give their real names and there was no expressed desire or acknowledgement of the training that was being offered. The first thing that was introduced in these training sessions was a structured class room environment, which helped the women to focus better and to take these sessions seriously. Additionally, gradual interactions led to an improvement in the scenario. Now they take active interest in learning all that is being offered and training modules are flexible and tailor made to the needs of the women. They embroider saris in delicate embroidery, they giggle infectiously while trying their hand at beauty skills on the caregivers themselves, who are willing subjects of their experiments. The different haircuts, the various levels of henna in the caregivers' hair, all are testaments to the learnings of these women. Anything and everything that they can learn is a preparation to fend for themselves when they step back into the world that they have been rescued from. And each day they pray that they shall get out. Once the training sessions are over, or when the women leave the Vigilance Home, the organization guarantees placement to these women in the destination area, where they would be linked up to the organization's branch in that area, so that there is a follow up and handholding mechanism in place. These organizations, where the women are placed, are quality assured by Action Et Aide. Women are also imparted basic entrepreneurship skills and money management, to hold them in good stead.



These sessions have not only helped these women develop self-confidence and belief in their ability to do something, but have also allowed them to interact with the world outside. There is a need to expand the network of organizations so that the safety net around these women, once they leave, is better. Follow-ups are necessary so that it reduces the chances of the women falling prey yet again to their earlier trade. Plans are also on for making arrangements to enable these women to take the National Council for Vocational Training exams, which would allow their registration with the employment department and also help them to get work through the Labor Ministry. Computer application courses makes them feel that they



are somehow walking shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world. Though lack of basic education means that they cannot work extensively on the computers, however, they are keen on becoming proficient with making basic designs and layouts, useful for getting employment as DTP (Desk Top Publishing) artists in design houses. However, a holistic programme support would mean more resources to be able to set up a better network, to provide better placements and to reach more women after they are released from the vigilance homes.

While the vocational and entrepreneurship training gives confidence to these women, basic education needs, emotional support and a safeguard against being trafficked has to be built into the programme. There has to be a provision for basic education so as to increase their employability in the market. In the vigilance home itself, language barriers and regional differences create suspicion, discontent and alienation among women who already feel victimized. The caregivers and the counselors coming in to impart vocational training as well as life enrichment sessions feel the need for a trained psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, with some experience/training in forensic psychiatry, to be available at the home at all times. Experts who have a formal training in dealing with women and children in conflict with the law should be especially brought in. This would meet the mental health requirements of not only the women, but also the caregivers, who feel that there is not adequate psychiatric assistance, to guide and support a psychiatrically untrained staff. The interventions that are currently being implemented, are well-meaning and constructive, but are short term for want of funds. This is inadequate, since healing and rehabilitation cannot be short-term and constrained. While women are supposed to be in the homes for a maximum period of 3-6 months, they have to stay here for periods extending upto a year and a half, due to the protracted legal process. However, to expedite their release into mainstream society, resources are needed to provide legal aid, so that their cases come up faster and they are rehabilitated with their families.



Psycho social training for care givers of shelter homes

In Chennai, the training for Staff on providing psychosocial care for women and children in institutions and handholding them in the rehabilitation process, that was imparted to 30 caregivers of this Home along with caregivers of other homes, has gone some way in making them understand the plight, the mind-sets, the hope, expectations and fears of these survivors. While it does not address some of the pre-conceived notions and judgments of some of the caregivers, it does serve to make them a little more patient and compassionate.

In Calicut, the Training in Psychosocial Care was organized for caregivers over 4 days, where experts from the field of child care and child psychology took 3 batches and a total of 95 caregivers from all the welfare institutions of the government in the state received training. These sessions, as Jamila, a caregiver for the past 8 years, first in the Girls' Home and now in the Boys' Home says, have helped them understand that each child comes with his/her own baggage, and their own history of trauma. While some prefer the structured environment that the Shelter Homes provide them with, some of those who have stayed on the streets for a longer period of time, prefer that freedom to this restricted environment. The training taught the caregivers how to treat children differently, how sometimes solitude and silence are more effective than attempts at engagement and conversations. More importantly, the training infused the caregivers with a sense of newness that they had begun to lose by being involved in this work for so long. Caregiver Stress/Fatigue Syndrome is not acknowledged or recognized usually, leading to apathy and indifference among those who directly influence target population such as these children in Children's Homes. Now, having acquired a better understanding, caregivers such as Jamila want to get more information and training in dealing with children with deviant behavior and on child psychology. Though this training makes her feel better equipped, she too, like her counterparts in Chennai, feels that she would feel more confident if there was a regular, rather than a part time psychiatrist who came to the Boys' and Girls' Homes. However, there is nothing in the world that she cherishes more than when the children from the home pass an exam or are released from the home.



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Ms. Rasiya, a caregiver at the Girl's Home, has been here for 7 years. She admits that earlier her task used to give her a lot of tension, since she had to deal with so many girls from so many different backgrounds. She also admits that earlier caregivers like her used to view the girls as being intrinsically problematic and therefore used to deal with them accordingly. However, the training showed her how to be empathetic to the fact that the girls were a product of their circumstances and to look beyond their present and into their potential to make their future better. That Raji (name changed) who has been at the house for 8 years, who has a wonderful talent for theatre, is at the home because her divorced mother could not afford to keep her or her other two sisters and therefore she had to be sent to the home. That Rubina (name changed), who is now at the After Care Home for Girls, is here because she was being sexually exploited by her own father. That while she was scarred by the experience, at the Home, her past gradually faded and she began training in theatre and music and now dreams of becoming an advocate.

The place where one gets totally drawn into the narration of the experience of Psychosocial Caregiving is Hyderabad. In Andhra Pradesh, there are a total of 21 children's homes. The project supported the appointment of counselors for the children's homes and observation homes. The 2 counselors from Hyderabad, 1 counselor from Vizag and 1 counselor from Tirupathi were a reservoir of information, learning and experience. They work with around 45 categories of children spread out across the homes, including orphans, runaways, destitutes, vagabonds, visiting them 3-4 times a week, nudging them gently but surely towards a better life. The experience and qualifications of the counselors is formidable. **Mr. Kismat Kumar**, Director of the Department, informs that the mandate of the department is to hire counselors to help children adjust better and to guide them towards behavior modification using psychological tools. He says that their task is to change normative behavior of the children and introduce new norms that are more acceptable by society. Hence, great attention was paid to the process of selection of the counselors who would bring about this transformation. The department invited the Andhra Pradesh Psychological Association to consider candidates for the task and then a Selection Committee, comprising of one university professor in Psychology, two NGOs that worked with children and Mr. Kismat Kumar, Director of the Department and Dr. Sukumar, the Deputy Director of the department, selected and placed the counselors on the task at hand.

In all homes, there are around 7 frontline workers, who, along with the Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor, look after approximately 100 children. The counselors chosen to be attached with each of the homes, as well as the frontline workers were all imparted the training of psychosocial care giving by the Head of Department of Psychology of the University of Andhra Pradesh. This training was done in phases, the first being imparted right after recruitment of the counselors. This was more like an orientation session, where the counselors were introduced to their work and to expectations from them. This was followed by a week-long second session after about 2 months. All the counselors got 4 counseling sessions, conducted by experts from NIMHANS(National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Scientists) based in Bangaluru, Karnataka. Following the orientation,

the counselors had to get down into the field and work for some time with the Homes before the second session was conducted. The second session addressed 15 topics including developmental stages of children, psychological make up of children, techniques or methods of counseling, de-addiction therapy and counseling, methods of recording and analyzing data, among other things. The counselors, many of who have private counseling practices, understood the place and importance of autogenic techniques (relaxation technique), positive reinforcement, yoga such as pranayama and meditation, modeling and mind management in dealing with the problems that the children face. While in other states, the training on psychosocial care giving was imparted to the care-givers, in Hyderabad these sessions were for those who were directly counseling the children in the homes.

Mr. B.S. Nabi, Counselor in the Boys' Home in Hyderabad, said that one of the first things that they had to do, after the orientation, was to go to the Home and try to establish a rapport with the boys. This takes a long time, he says, because the boys are influenced and affected by the kind of relationship that they have had with society. Those who come from broken homes or have run away from an abusive parent do not open up that easily. Those who are excessively aggressive respond well to love and affection, though after a period of time. His insight into the minds of the children shows that the longer a child has been on the streets, the longer the duration between his stepping out of his biological home and his entry into the Children's Home, the more difficult it is to mould him. Many a times the behaviour inside the Home is an extension of the behavior a child has been practicing on the road. For example, he talked about a boy who, when he used to get a new shirt, would wear it under his old shirt, since he was afraid that someone might take it off him, forcefully, as he was used to this while on the streets. The other problem, he said, was that unlike with the other children he counsels in his private practice, the information pertaining to these children does not come from one source, neither is it free of biases. Information on each child has to be constructed from the child, the supervisor, and other caregivers and then the information has to be verified. Knowledge and sensitivity to non-verbal communication has to be built in this exercise. The 3-4 hours that he spends with the children, 3-4 times a week, helps in forging a trusting relationship with them, thereby enabling him to make changes in the children and their lives.





Mr. M.S. Rao, is the Counselor for the Government Special Home for Boys in Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). He finds that the biggest thing that they as counselors are able to do, is to facilitate the rebirth of an interest in these children to again belong to society. While the boys get training in employment skills, being able to talk to counselors helps in the socialization of the children, so that they can fit in with the society. This, he feels, is the lifelong impact of the counseling the child receives since these children view society as one which did not provide them even with the basic requirements. Hence, their suspicions, their distrust, have all to be recognized, appreciated, and then addressed so that they can go back to the society as healed persons. He has had to work very hard to win the trust of these children, who, on seeing him come everyday, have now started giving him the trust that he needs to enter into their lives and their thoughts. He acknowledges that it is difficult to deal with these children, who need special attention and are therefore in the Special Home. He has to deal with and break through their initial distrust, something that he does not have to bother about much in his private practice.

Mr. Pullamarajus, Counselor for the Children's Home and Observation Home in Tirupathi (Andhra Pradesh), whose qualifications and experiences in child psychology have armed him with some knowledge and understanding of the peculiarities regarding these children coming from this region. While he is able to counsel parents along with the children in the Children's Home, the Observation Home is out of bounds for parents. Emotional imbalances are experienced by these children, who feel let down by their parents and the society at large. Different skills are needed to do counseling at the Observation Home. It is important to note that sensitive handling has to be practiced at all stages of handling the children. When they are brought into the Reception Units or Observation Homes, they are given a customary bath, whatever personal belongings they might possess are kept in safe keeping by the Home. Detaching them from whatever little they know as their only belongings in a strange place, also requires empathy and understanding. Welcoming them into the folds of the Home needs to be done sensitively, since they may take some time in settling into the new place. Taking their case history, giving them assurances of safety and trust, keeping them informed while their case is decided by the Child Welfare Committee or the Juvenile Justice Board, as the case might be, requires patience and gentleness that is the cornerstone of counseling services in these Homes. The right attitude and the requisite experience and qualifications, coupled with a genuine interest in working with these children are key criterions to keep in mind, while selecting the staff and counselors for these Homes. One of the key exercises that the department has invested in, besides the attention paid to the selection of counselors, is the situational analysis done of the

children in the region, especially the kind of children that arrive at the Homes, to understand their socio-cultural and psychological backgrounds. Knowledge of this has also been one of the key pre-requisites in the counselors who have been selected by the Selection Committee. Bringing children into these Homes, for however brief a period, affords those at the Homes to impart some life skills to these children, to somehow influence their minds, thoughts and actions that would prevent them from falling prey to their earlier practices and behaviors. This requires innovative thinking.

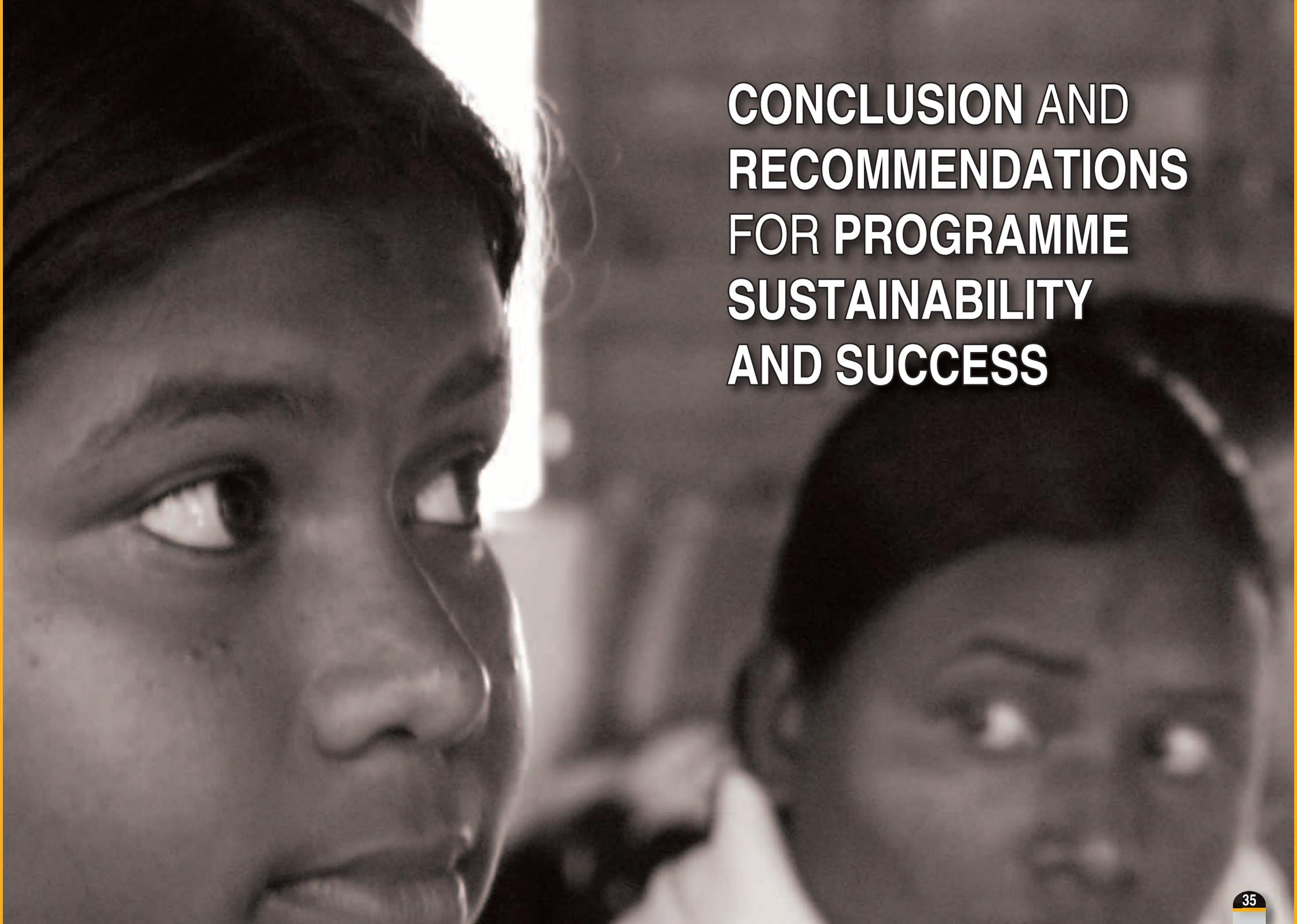
In Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), the department has made efforts to impart some vocational skills to the children when they come in for brief periods of time also, so that the boy can go out and earn a living for himself, without endangering himself. Adopting practices that are low on cost, but provide high benefits to the boys later, such as teaching them how to repair gas stoves, how to iron clothes, how to cut hair become earning avenues for the boys. This in no manner upstages the benefits that the children who stay at the homes for longer, get from the computer training classes and other such trainings. Venkatesh and Raj (names changed) happily work on word documents, draw pictures on the computer, speeding through one creative output to the other, something that they would not have been able to even dream of doing. And through all this, are the counselors, motivating them to step out of their disillusion driven lethargy, learning new skills and preparing for the world outside. They go beyond their mandates, most of the time, since they realize the importance of what they are doing. Some counselors, like Mr. Pullamarajus, teach Mathematics to those who are interested in higher studies.

Some, like **Ms. Usha**, have taken the boys that extra mile, maybe because of her specialization in Psychotherapy, to accept themselves and others, breaking the strongholds of stereotypes that society has imposed in them. She is a Counselor with the Children's Home in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), earlier attached to Special Homes, where intensive and specialized attention has to be given to the children, with a view towards rehabilitation and re-integration into society, till the age of 18 years. It helped that she is not a judgmental person by nature, and as a result she is able to see the children not as criminals, but as products of neglect and broken homes. Her empathy has made sure that the boys listen to her suggestions. For example, earlier the boys were not interested in learning hair cutting, embroidery, etc. At an age when their budding sexuality and fear of taunts and being made fun of, can have tremendous psychologically scarring impact, a boy was ashamed of his skill to do beautiful embroidery in *zari* (golden thread work) and other threads on saris, seeing it as a sign of being effeminate. However, an understanding and therefore timely intervention by Ms. Usha, appreciation and encouragement of his art, has today led to 7 other boys also wanting to learn the same. On visiting the Children's Home, one got an opportunity to meet the boy in question and was thrilled to see the enthusiasm in the other boys, not just to do the same work, but also in showing off the work of their friend. This not only instills a feeling of belonging in the child, but makes him feel important. In addition, being able to earn a little bit of money in exchange for doing this work, makes children feel empowered and confident of being able to survive in the outside world. For example, the girls in the Tirupathi children's home, who made and sold artificial flowers and from the earnings, they contributed Rs. 5,000 to the Chief Minister's Flood Relief Fund. This greatly impedes any destructive actions, acting as a natural, positive deterrent. However, to be able to achieve this, one has to be totally involved in the lives of the children. Like Ms. Usha, one has to see their achievements as her own. Like her, one has to have a finger on their pulse, know what they are thinking, feeling, saying and doing. Only then can one be allowed the privilege of being able to direct and guide the children.

An interesting interaction in Hyderabad was with **Mr. Siva Kumar**, Chief Probation Superintendent. Whenever a child is ordered to be restored to the care of parents or guardians or a suitable person, the Probation Officer is required to effect supervision during such period and report to the Committee regularly. Also, the Probation Officer is to observe the child who is released from the special home or the children's home, to make sure that the child is being taken care of and/or that the child is not resorting to activities in conflict with the law. This period of probation lasts for approximately 6 months. In Hyderabad, conversation with Mr. Siva Kumar offered an insight into how the sessions on psychosocial care have assisted the Probation Officers to move from a 'custodial' mindset to a 'guiding and protection' mindset. Most of the Probation Officers have been taken from the Police Department, where they paint all offenders with the same brush. Sessions on Psychosocial Care has allowed them a peek into the feasibility and usefulness of an alternative and more understanding way of looking at children who may be in conflict with the law. The change is gradual, but definite. It is reflected in small changes in behaviors such as ceasing of secondary victimization by Probation officers and other caregivers. Earlier, due to their custodial attitude, they used to call the children by their serial number, which reinforced the circumstances and present position of these children. Now, they call them by their names. They extend dignity to these children. They acknowledge their identities.





A black and white photograph of two young girls. The girl in the foreground is on the left, looking towards the right. The girl in the background is on the right, also looking towards the right. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR PROGRAMME
SUSTAINABILITY
AND SUCCESS**

Going to all these centres, meeting all the children, caregivers and understanding the mechanisms and institutions was an enriching experience, one that threw up many questions, brought tears many a times... Yet, there was a feeling of pride, a sense of achievement that ran through all the homes visited, all the people spoken with. A sense of having done something positive at the end of each day. The structured life, the computer training course, the access to understanding caregivers, a healthy environment for activity filled years, theatre workshops, vocational courses make these children now feel that they can make a difference in the world they inhabit. It takes years, but finally when they come out of these homes, they do not feel unwanted by society. They feel energized and ambitious, like they can do anything.

However, the task has just begun. Much more needs to be done. More NGOs should be encouraged and associated with by the government to engage in combating this heinous crime against humanity. **Capacity building should be done on a large and continuous basis**, not just for the NGOs working in this area, but also law enforcers, decision makers, government officials, as well as counselors in the shelter homes, vigilance homes, children's homes and so on. **More people should be encouraged to train and then join as counselors.** Not enough counselors/caregivers in the homes mean that the Caregiver to child ratio is totally non-conducive to an involved relationship between the caregivers and the residents. Psychosocial training helps the caregivers in their day-to-day working. However, a more effective use of this training would be if the caregivers had the mental space and time to be able to form better relationships with the children, rather than just struggling to do their basic minimum duties. Caregivers across centres candidly state that their equation was limited to basic protection, safety and control, rather than the in-depth interpersonal relationship that was required to nurture these children emotionally. More than anything else, a concerted and careful look is required into the resources that are being deployed to look after these women and children. The people who take on this herculean task need to be those who are truly interested and dedicated to it, not an easy matter, nor something that can be everyone's aptitude or interest. **Professional psychiatrists should be engaged for the homes.** While in Hyderabad the department has formed a network of child and clinical psychiatrists, who are the referral doctors for the children, should they need psychiatric intervention, they too do not have the provision of a regular psychiatrist.



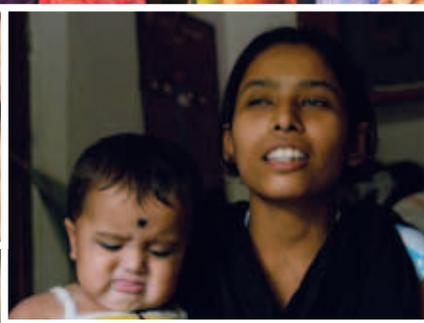
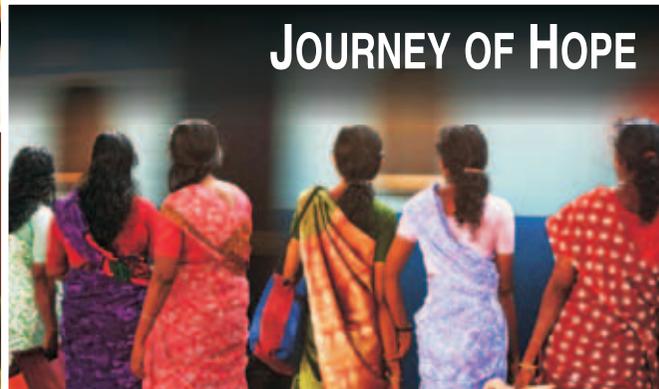
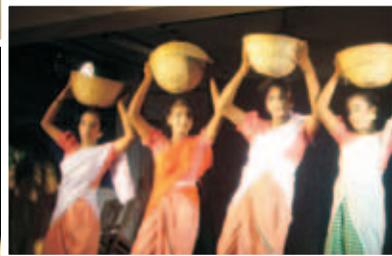
At the same time, **more vocational courses**, specially mechanical training need to be introduced, to expand the options for these children. Many other areas still do need addressing. There is a need to institutionalize psychiatry services in the homes. Language barriers, etc need to be addressed. **Special provisions for mentally challenged children need to be institutionalized.** In Chennai, there is no separate provision, while in Calicut, there is a Home for Mentally Deficient Children, where they are provided special education.

While the children show clear signs suggesting post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, Attention Deficit Syndrome, they are mostly managed by the caregivers themselves. Care givers are often not qualified to deal with such situations and neither do they have the time and energy to look into individual concerns of childrens. **The counselors in Hyderabad, are a possible replicable model.** Yet, posts of these counselors are not recognized or institutionalized by the department. Having been introduced as a pilot with UNODC support, this needs to be institutionalized and made permanent, so that improved and long-term interventions could be possible.

More financial resources need to be planned and constructively channelized into this area, to enable the hiring of adequate resources and building infrastructure, to enable long term life planning for the children and women, providing a home for those who do not have a family to go back to or cant go back and creating more employment avenues for them. **Result based financing of interventions could ensure that finances are used effectively** in areas where the need is great and the impact is greater. A lot more needs to be done. Yet, it must be acknowledged that from Ranchi to Hyderabad, it is wonderful to see efforts that have gone into providing these women and children an escape from the often dangerous lives that they are stuck in. There is a need for improvement, but already there are numerous efforts being made to empower these women and children. By efforts and good fortune these women and children have found access to these various NGOs and government shelter homes. However, this is where the real task starts... Like the counselors in Hyderabad believe, '*gatamaha gata*' (past is past). But for a bright and healthy future, work needs to be done to create the sun that these women and children are seeking to reach out to. *Suryah bhava.* (May you be the Sun!)



JOURNEY OF HOPE





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