About Prayas

Prayas is a Field Action Project of the Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, initiated in 1990. It is a response to the needs of disadvantaged groups being processed by the Criminal Justice System (CJS). It aims at socio legal and economic rehabilitation of persons who are at a greater risk of being criminalised, vulnerable to being trafficked (for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation), or destitution.

Mission

To contribute knowledge and insight to the current understanding of aspects of CJS policy and process in India, with specific reference to socio-economically vulnerable and excluded communities, groups, and individuals who are at greater risk of being criminalised, or exposed to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Objectives

- To demonstrate the need for social work intervention in the criminal justice system such as police stations, prisons, courts and institutions for women.

- To work towards rehabilitation of persons coming out of, or vulnerable to crime, prostitution, or destitution.

- To improve access to legal rights of persons processed by the criminal justice system and to promote the use of correctional laws to aid rehabilitation of vulnerable groups.

- To identify issues relevant to rehabilitation and attempt to address them at policy level.

- To increase awareness in government and society about issues related to rehabilitation of persons affected by crime, commercial sexual exploitation or destitution.

- To generate knowledge in the field of social work, criminology and corrections through the analysis of field experience.

Geographical Coverage: Mumbai, Thane and Bharuch Districts

- Prisons
- Government Protective and Shelter homes for women
- Courts and Legal aid systems
- Police Station

**Who Does Prayas Reach Out To?**

- Women and youth undertrial prisoners and those being processed by the criminal justice system, and their families (including children of women prisoners left outside, while the mothers are inside).
- Women and girls rescued by the police from prostitution.
- Destitute women and girls, especially those vulnerable to crime and/or commercial sexual exploitation.
- Women or youth referred by personnel within the criminal justice system, voluntary organisations, ex-beneficiaries of Prayas, or the general public.

**Why Does Prayas Work With These Groups?**

- Persons drifting into exploitative situations have done so as a result of their past experiences and social circumstances.
- They have adopted alternative supportive structures and behaviours to counter life situations.
- Having been subjected to a series of exploitative situations, they may get drawn to behaviours that are destructive to self or others.
- Separation from the family and other cultural units has resulted in exclusion from mainstream society.
- They need support to prevent their further exclusion from society.
- Every person rehabilitated adds to a contributing member in the legal economy.

**The Approach**

To facilitate a process where a person shifts (away) from an environment conducive to crime or commercial sexual exploitation to one that offers stability and safety in following areas:

a) Shelter
b) Income in the legal sector
c) Connections in mainstream society

This is expected to reduce the chances of a person resorting to or being subjected to exploitative behaviour.

**What Does Prayas Do?**

Social workers and training instructors visit different settings including prisons, police stations and government run institutions for women. Services such as information and awareness programmes, educative sessions, family support and legal aid are focused upon. This is done with the objective of establishing rapport and to provide information about rehabilitative services.
In order to counter problematic individual and environmental situations, a programme has been designed to replace illegal/inappropriate acquaintances, behaviors and support systems with those that are socially acceptable. A team comprising of social workers, vocational training instructors, and counsellors based in Mumbai and Bharuch operate from Development Centres for male (youth) and women.

**Rehabilitation Plan**

The plan is implemented on a phase-by-phase basis, as below:

a. Emergency support including medical aid, house repair and rent, legal aid, child support, travel to hometown, etc is provided.

b. Shelter facilities in institutions, hostels, and group homes are arranged for persons who cannot live with their families, due to past behaviour, family circumstances and social stigma.

c. Family support and counselling services are provided to ensure support and enable the family deal with difficult circumstances while also supporting the person who has been/is being processed by the criminal justice system.

d. Education, vocational training and job creation are explored, with special focus on the welfare sector. Accordingly, trainees are placed in the voluntary sector which lends itself for providing a protected, supervised and socially conducive environment for development of social and technical skills necessary for economic and social upgradation. A stipend is provided to trainees during the placement period (ranging from three months to two years).

e. Legal documents are obtained in order to help a person exert rights as a citizen. He/she is also encouraged to gain access to public systems like nationalised banks, health system and welfare schemes.

**Income Generation for sustaining rehabilitation programme**

Sustaining the above mentioned programme remains a challenge. Factors accounting for this include: lack of visibility of institutional and custodialised populations, coupled with limitations like lack of documents to assert citizenship rights to health and public distributions systems as well as welfare schemes. Prayas has been trying to develop its own income generation component in order to meet programme expenses.

An income generation unit located in Worli undertakes orders of cloth bound stationary and participates in exhibitions and sales. In order to develop the capacities of this unit, additional manpower is essential.

**How Can You Help?**

- Sponsor stipend and travel for one person (Rs. 2500/- per month for a period extending to 12 months)
- Support education and/or vocational training activities of beneficiaries (Rs. 5000/- per person per annum)
- Provide one time emergency support to families (Rs. 5000/- per family)
- Sponsor education and nutrition for children (Rs. 500/- per child per month)
- Help support administrative expenses
- Contribute towards staff salaries
- Place an order for cloth bound stationary (such as jute bags, files, folders) at the Prayas Income Generation Centre.

Contributions can be made by cheque/cash/kind. Cheques may be drawn in favour of **TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**. Donations are 50% exempt under sec. 80G (2) (a) (iiiif) and 100% exempt under 35 (i) (iii) of the Income Tax Act.

**Contact Centre’s:**

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<tr>
<th><strong>Maharashtra</strong></th>
<th><strong>Gujarat</strong></th>
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| **Women’s Development Centre**  
Room No. 49  
2nd Floor, Guilder Lane  
Municipal School  
Opp. Mumbai Central Rly Station (Local),  
Mumbai 400 008  
Tel: 022-23004429/23005329 | Prayas - Stri Niketan Building  
Opp. Motilal Vin Baugh, Soneri Mahel  
Bharuch, Gujarat - 392 001  
Tel: 02642-222618  
Email: bharuch_prayas@yahoo.co.in |
| **Youth Development Centre**  
Room No. 61 & 62, 4th Floor  
Sadhvi Savitirbai Phule Municipal School,  
Byculla, Mumbai 400 027.  
Tel: 022-3019583 | Administrative Office  
9/1 B.D.D. Chawls  
Worli, Mumbai 400 018  
Tel: 022-24947156/24902285  
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