KOSHISH
An Initiative on Homelessness and Destitution

FIELD ACTION PROJECT
TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MUMBAI

BIENNIAL REPORT
2010 - 2012
CONTENTS

Foreword
Acknowledgements

Koshish: Vision and Objectives
A Home Truth: Destitution in India
The Law and Criminalization of Poverty
Doing Our Bit: Interventions and Strategies

Sailing Through: Success Stories
Reaching Out
Networking and Alliances
Statistics

Setting the Stage: Going Ahead
FOREWORD

Mohd Tarique, Program Head, Koshish

It is a very special feeling I have as I write this note. I feel extremely relaxed and proud. I know we have stood our ground and did it fairly. Last year we completed five years of our being. Think of it and looks like it started yesterday. Such has been the pace that there was not a moment to ease. It has been a really tough and demanding journey. We faced resistance and challenges at every stage. Threats, at almost in every step we took ahead. However our need to be able to stand up with people who were wronged by their own protector i.e. the State was bigger than all resistances and difficulties. What has evolved is extremely precious and pure. I see it as a time to break for a while and just reflect on what has gone into reaching this far. It is important that we move beyond program details and use this opportunity to reflect on deeper and more critical inputs that went into making this work.

I clearly remember the 'not so encouraging' things people had to say about Koshish. How it was 'evident' to them that Koshish would not survive as there was not enough to drive this program. Interestingly, friends who would talk endlessly about Human Rights and Liberty and Equality and Justice and what all, would advice us to do something meaningful. They were worried that we had lost our sight and there was no merit in choosing to work with people who have no value. To us, it meant departure from all such learnings we received. Probably, they forgot the basic teaching that forms the foundation for all principles of justice, equality and rights i.e. every Human Being has a right to live with dignity. It is criminal to criminalize the poverty or vulnerability of the person due to destitution of any form. Thanks to all such advices or opposition, Koshish knew it had to move ahead on its own merit, without really expecting or requiring any support, any acknowledgement from anywhere. Once we knew we had to do it alone, we realized how huge was our stock of energy and drive to fight.

I must share about the beautiful relations Koshish gave us. While most thought us to be irrelevant, there were few who needed no reason to be with us. These are the people who put their trust and faith in us. These individuals, belonging to different spaces, were all united in validating the vision Koshish had. They saw clarity even in the ambiguous plans we would make. These are the people who stood with us rock solid and helped us tide over all the odds. When we look back at the journey all these years, we realize how crucial they are for Koshish.

Mohan Ramamoorthy, Vandana Gopikumar, Kamini Kapadia, Prof. S. Parasuraman, Dr. Vijay Raghawan , Roja Pillai, Rajee Menon, Joycie Dias, James, Indu Prajna Singh, Asha Banu Soletti, Altaf Sheikh, Roshni Nair, Amita Bhide, Kulyash Sharma, Gautam Arwel , Krishna Rathod, Pukhraj Bora, Vijay Nagaraj, Kritika Srivivasan; all these people played distinct roles in the progress of Koshish, each contributing in his or her own way. Though most of them are unrelated to each other and had different ways in which they became our strength, one thing that is common for all of them is the absolute trust they had in Koshish and the meaning that they saw in our work. Success and failure becomes inconsequential when you know the process has been fair and what is 'just'. Irrespective of the distance that Koshish covers in the years to come, they will remain our 'reference points' for understanding 'Relations beyond Relations'.

Building Koshish at a time when nobody believed in it, we decided to play by the rules. We kept it very simple and drew our energy from the people we worked with. We simply followed what we are always taught, right from the childhood: To be competitive, to be tough and give it all you have - but do it fairly. These were the values that form a basis for how families and communities behave. This was the approach that Koshish followed and continues to. People we worked with, especially in the government departments, would see us as 'fearless, ruthless negotiators' but someone who does it 'fairly' and 'never seek favors'.

In this half a decade of engaging with the issue, we have learnt there is nothing more important than 'love and respect' that we can have for others. Every person, needs his or her dignity to be maintained. Most relations die when these start disappearing. Have experienced hundreds of cases where people moved out of their safe 'homes' to mostly hostile, unfamiliar streets, simply to protect their dignity and respect.

We have tried to build ourselves as an organization that functions out of compassion and commitment and not due to programmatic goals. We want to grow as an organization that has 'Rights and Justice' at its core, that values and respects people's individuality. We value people for our belief in them. Our values and ethics go deeper than merely having a written code of conduct for the organization or a manual to guide us. They are central to our being. For us as an organization, that is the way of life.

The journey so far has taught us one very important lesson: Belief in self and why it is important to keep believing that you will survive when others expire. We are glad we had that kind of energy and strength to stand by what we started with. The journey ahead is going to get intense and more challenging but we know, we will progress comfortably. We would not stop before we are finished and there can be nothing so bad that can actually finish us, therefore, nothing to fear. We will only move ahead from here!

KOSHISH: A TISS Initiative on Homelessness and Destitution 2010-2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1) Department of Women and Child Development
   • Dr. Satbir Singh, Principal Secretary
   • Shri Sharad Kinker, Commissioner
   • Shri Marathe, Joint Commissioner
   • Shri Krishna Rathore, Asst. Commissioner
   • Shri Randive, Asst. Commissioner
   • Shri Rajaram Phule, Asst. Commissioner
   • Shri AK Shinde, Inspector of Certified Schools
   • Shri Rahul More, District Officer, Mumbai Suburb
   • Shri Vijay Gaikwad, Probation Officer
   • Shri Dattatray Kute, Probation Officer
   • Mrs Surekha Dubal, Head Clerk

2) Judiciary and Legal Aid
   • Shri H Belosay, Cheif Metropolitan Magistrate
   • Shri Pukhraj Bora, Former Member Secretary, MSLA
   • Shri M P Baghe, Metropolitan Magistrate
   • Ms. Monika Sakhirani, Advocate, High Court
   • Shri Silvin Kale, Member, MDLAS

3) Beggars' Home, Mumbai
   • Shri D.Y.Vichare, Superintendent (Male Section, Mumbai Home)
   • Ms Ujjawala Patil, Superintendent(Female Section, Mumbai Home)
   • Shri Bhagat, Superintendent, Satara Beggars’ Home
   • Shri G K Arwel, Probation Officer
   • Shri Ramesh Survase, Probation Officer
   • Ms. Pardesi, Probation Officer
   • Ms. Vaishali, Probation Officer
   • Ms. Kosare, Probation Officer
   • Dr. Sangole, Chief Medical Officer
   • Ms. Rajeshree Mayekar, Nurse
   • All the care taker staff

4) Tata Institute of Social Sciences
   • Dr. S Parasuraman, Director
   • Mr. S.Chatterjee, Registrar
   • Dr. Neela Dabir, Deputy Registrar
   • Dr. Surender Jaswal, Dean, SSW
   • Mr. Dilip K Shetty, Personnel
   • Ms. Rajee Menon, Accounts
   • Mr. Shinde
   • Ms. Roja Pillai
   • Ms. Usha
   • Ms. Joycie Dias and team
   • Mr. Mahendra, Maintenance
   • Mr. Mustafa Momin, Dining Hall
   • Mr. Shinde, Personnel

5) Network Organizations
   • Prayas, Mumbai
   • Project Crayons, Mumbai
   • Saathi, Mumbai
   • LAHRC, Gujarat
   • Dil Se, New Delhi
   • Naman Seva Samiti, Betul
   • Arpan, Indore
   • The Banyan, Chennai
   • People’s Rights Movement, Kolkata
   • HDFC, Mumbai
   • Rangoonwala Foundation, Mumbai
   • Ration Kriti Samiti, Mumbai
   • Action Aid India, Mumbai
   • Action Aid India, Chennai
   • People’s Forum, Bhubaneshwar
   • People’s Rights Movement, Kolkata
   • Dynamic Action Group, Lucknow

6) Government Institutions
   • Ms. Indu Pardeshi, Superintendent, Kasturba Mahila Vastigriha
   • Ms. Rajeshree, Superintendent, Sukh Shanti

7) Shelter Homes
   • Sister Jane, Ashray
   • Niramaya Niketan
   • JJ Dharamshala
   • Asha Daan

8) Friends of Koshish:
   • Dr. Prahlad Jhavar
   • Mr. Indu Prakash Singh
   • Shri Kulkarni, Senior Police Inspector
   • Mr. Vellodi
   • Mr. Viju B
   • Shri Gopal Subramaniam
   • Shri Harsh Mander
   • Shri Millon Kothari
   • Ms Usha Ramanathan
   • Ms Amita Joseph
   • Shri Dr. Prahlad S Jhavar
   • Shri Indu Prakash Singh
   • Ms Madhavi Menon
   • Shri Kulkarni, Senior Police Inspector
   • Ms Chaitali Shetty
   • Shri. Nirbhay Shankar Pathak
   • Shri. Kulyash Sharma
   • Shri. Vellodi
   • Shri. Viju B.
   • Shri. Danish Raza

9) Field Work Students
   • Khuslhu
   • Amanda
   • Sabina
   • Andrea
   • Jasmine
   • Glenda
   • Isha
   • Vikas

10) Interns
    • Namita Shah (National Law School of Indian Universities, Bangalore)
    • Anumita Chakrabarti (National Law School of Indian Universities, Bangalore)
    • Sakshi Lamba (Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi)
KOSHISH: VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Over the years, the TISS has amassed an extensive experience base on issues related to poverty, beggary and destitution, the criminal justice system and social development. To build on its engagement with socially excluded populations, the TISS started a Field Action Project, Koshish in 2006 where it committed itself towards the protection of the rights of one of the most vulnerable populations, i.e. Destitute and shelterless people criminalized under Beggary Prevention Legislations of the State.

At the core of the project, lies the issue of homelessness. With various processes of ‘ill-planned’ planned development, lack of family support, acute illness or absolute poverty, poor people are forced into Destitution. The issues that such people face once out there in the unfamiliar and very often ‘hostile environment’ were largely the starting point for the conceptualization of this work.

There have been very serious linkages between destitution and beggary; both helpless people getting into beggary as well as state punishing the working poor on charges of beggary, merely on the basis of their appearances. There is a popular notion among people that those who are into begging are making lot of money and they do it as choice and therefore, deserve to be punished. In reality, these notions have very little relevance. Unfortunately, people choose to go by what is convenient for them to believe, without bothering to know the reality.

The Beggary Prevention Law was brought in place to check the issue of beggary. It aimed at preventing beggary through training and rehabilitation of those who were involved in begging. However, the way beggary and beggar is defined in the act changes the whole document into very vulnerable and anti-poor law. Over the years, it has been largely arrests and punishment that got implemented, while the training and rehabilitation program became either irrelevant or absent.

Our Vision

Our vision is to have a society that is just and equal where poverty is not criminalized.

Koshish aims at addressing the interrelated issues of beggary, destitution and homelessness through a combination of measures, pitched at the varying levels of providing support for basic and immediate needs, facilitating linkages to gainful and secure employment and advocacy for integration into mainstream structures. We are also engaged in development of meaningful policy for securing rightful entitlements for the homeless and destitute population.

The key objectives of the project are:

1. To reach out to the destitute and homeless population and to understand their psychological, social, economic, cultural contexts.

2. To engage with daily issues of survival, protection and growth of the homeless populations, thus addressing the immediate and long-term causes that may lead to destitution.

3. To work with persons in custody under Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 and assist in their reintegration with the family and community structures.

4. To facilitate the participation of destitute and homeless population in the process of their citizenship entitlements and rehabilitation.

5. Advocacy for the repeal of Beggary prevention legislations and inclusive policies and programmes securing the rights of the homeless and destitute.

6. To network with state agencies and non-governmental bodies for intervention, advocacy and resource mobilization.
A HOME TRUTH:
DESTITUTION IN INDIA

Living on the street is a traumatic experience where abuse is commonplace. Ever doubtful and suspicion-filled eyes of the public question the motives of those on the streets. The police see drugs and begging as two inseparable aspects of a homeless person’s life. Very often, they are seen as people who do not want to work and are happy making their living out of begging. Members of the public refer to them in words which have negative connotations - thief, beggar, criminal, nuisance, problem, social disease, dirt, ‘burden on society’ and so on. Even the system has not been able to keep itself away from such perceptions.

Harassment, abuse and continuous struggle are the key words that come to mind when one talks about understanding destitution and homelessness. This population comprises not only of migrant workers who move in search of employment but people who are mentally ill, disabled, aged, infirm and those abandoned by their families. If we get into the detailed profiling of these groups, we would find an extreme range of factors responsible for their being on the streets. Unaware of any kind of policy or program by the government or any debate at national or international levels, what a homeless citizen knows is that every new day brings with it new challenges in the form of problems and every problem requires a different level of adjustment.

In order to device strategies to prevent such criminalization, it is important to understand the origin and nature of the problem. It is very crucial to know the gaps and lacuna in the existing functioning to make interventions effective. As it is life on street is too tough and it becomes worse when there is not only social boycott but also a greater degree of stigma and abuse.

Battling this problem requires long-term collective action, political will and the services of the local administration, the voluntary agencies and civil society. It is here that the need for a front arises which can take on the issue of criminalization of these vulnerable groups. Individual efforts are being made with different groups. However, to push for any systematic intervention at the government level, collective force is required.

This ‘Collective Force’ would not only provide us strength in our attempts for Policy formulation but will also provide very crucial and much needed assistance in each other’s inter- state work, especially matters related to rehabilitation and family reintegration. It will certainly need serious and sustainable efforts over a period of time to develop any effective strategy. We’ll also need to identify where the processes have failed and why have they failed. Where data fails, research fails, statistics fail, there field work comes in. With the vast experience of our work with different vulnerable groups, together we have the potential to become a platform from where this issue could be addressed forcefully.

With this hope and belief in the collective strength, we begin a journey that will, hopefully, lead to a more just and fair society where the poor is no longer punished for being poor, where poverty is not a crime and the poor are not criminalized.
THE LAW AND CRIMINALISATION OF POVERTY

One thing that is common to most of the homeless groups is their possibility of getting processed under Beggary Prevention Laws. One may or may not be into begging but their presence on the street in the situation of destitution makes them vulnerable to get picked up and confined into institutions under Beggary Prevention Laws. In different states, there might be different laws to deal with beggary but the profile of those processed under such laws is more or less same.

The anti-beggary law itself does not draw any distinction between organized begging where one or more persons are compelled to beg by force and people who beg to sustain themselves. The current institutionalized approach to prevent begging is only resulting in punishing the destitute and abandoned people. People who are driven or forced to beg — many of whom are unable to find employment because of old age, physical disability, mental illness or adjustment problems — would remain as vulnerable as before. For these abandoned, dispossessed and destitute people, begging is not out of choice but a matter of survival; an enforced stay in a beggar home cannot deter them from returning to begging when they are released.

One could also argue that the law only deals with the symptoms of the problem of beggary, not with its causes. By dumping these people into custodial institutions, government can not wish the beggars away. They remain; their problems remain; they still do not have any alternate means of subsistence.

Begging and homelessness do not fundamentally arise only out of the urban space, and hence cannot be resolved within its confines alone. The current government mechanism to deal with the issue is negative and thus not yield any result. The real solution, perhaps, would be to recognize the potential of the people and expand livelihood options. But in the process, it is crucial to have a legal system that does not exclude the most vulnerable from the development process. The poor farmers and labourers who are forced to migrate from their native lands for various reasons, the aged abandoned by their families, the mentally ill, especially women, all find themselves under the purview of this law. The nature of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 and its implementation, which criminalises poverty has been the prime concern for our work.

One of the ambulances contributed by Project Crayons parked inside the Beggars' Home in Chembur. The ambulance services have greatly helped in facilitating medical processes for residents brought in, under the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.
Doing Our Bit: Interventions and Strategies

Koshish views its objectives as the primary responsibilities of the government. Efforts have been made to get into collaboration with the government and ensure that the government takes up the responsibility in the entire process. Koshish has been working very closely with the government machinery, thus, attempting to influence change from within and making the government accountable towards its people. With our experiences in Mumbai and Delhi, we have realized that improved structures and arrangements for the betterment of people could be soundly ensured with active government participation. We directed our interventions broadly at advocacy with the government and other stakeholders for the repeal of the present legislation and greater degree of rights and entitlements for the Urban Poor especially homeless citizens. More direct programs were focused towards ensuring “Protection of Legal rights of Persons under BPBA, 1959” and Rehabilitation and Re-integration of individuals in the societal structure through various processes of capacity building.

Some Key Strategies Include:

1. Reducing vulnerabilities through early intervention.
3. Developing linkages between sources and destination.
4. Linkages between homeless populations across cities.
5. Identifying role of specific Departments in the Government, e.g. Department of Social Welfare, Department of Women and Child Development, Social Justice and Empowerment, Health, etc. and lobbying for their coordination.
7. Building Public opinion.
8. Influencing Policy decision’s.
9. Networking and alliance building for sharing as well as policy advocacy.
10. Community Based Rehabilitation and Institutional placement.

Intervention towards the realization of above-mentioned objectives was directed towards two groups of the destitute population in Mumbai and Delhi – the homeless and destitute population living on the streets, and those who are housed in the Beggars’ Home. We are successfully engaged with different processes owned by the government as part of our strategic interventions, while the work inside the institutions is mostly catering to the rehabilitation needs of persons in custody. Presently, we are working in four beggars’ homes in Delhi and two homes in Mumbai. In addition to this, we have active engagements with the homeless on the streets, both in Mumbai and Delhi. From August 2010 to July 2012, we covered around 4000 people through various programs.

State versus People: Residents of the Beggars’ Home playing cricket with the Superintendent and other staff members of the home as a part of Koshish’s recreational programme that helps create stronger bonds among the staff and residents within the home, which continues to be an effective strategy to minimise custodial violence.
**SOME KEY INTERVENTIONS HAVE BEEN:**

1. **Calling Home:** This program involves tracing the family, relatives, employers or friends through phone calls, postal communication and visits. This is our very first step towards the rehabilitation of individuals in custodial homes. Phone calls help us trace the families and subsequent release of the client. It also helps the person to gain control over his annoyances and psychological exertions. Home visits are made to facilitate the process of repatriation and re-integration into the families and society at large. These visits enable us to build a relationship with the family even after the clients are sent back home. As a part of the tracing process, we contact our network/alliance partners in other states and also take the help of the local police mostly through phone calls. More than 1000 persons were covered through this support programme.

2. **Night Outs:** This initiative involves reaching out to the homeless populations in the city primarily during the night at place where they gather to rest. Efforts have gone into identifying such individuals and groups and initiating dialogues with the communities. Night outs have been the starting point of engaging with the homeless and destitute populations. It has not only helped us develop an understanding of the life style of the homeless but also identify and respond to their needs effectively. This has led to large scale mobilisation of these groups.

3. **Medical Aid:** Remarkable change in the medical environment within the custodial institution truly reflects the impact that Koshish has created. Earlier patients were hardly taken out of the institution for treatment. This often used to take days and in cases of emergencies (which are quite frequent inside the beggars' home given the profile of the population being brought there) it was mostly ‘a delayed process’. But now regular referrals are made to various civic hospitals and clients are being provided with the required treatment. Constant engagement with the staff members has also resulted in increased involvement and interest from the Hospital and guarding staff with the patient. More than 500 persons benefited from medical and health interventions.

4. **‘My Space’ / ‘Free Space’**: This programme intends to create an environment of ‘freedom’ that would eventually lead to rehabilitation and re-integration. This space allows its users to bring out hidden skills and talents without fear of abuse or punishment. The purpose of initiating this program in Beggar’s Home was to give people a sense of freedom while they are still in custody and at the same time, developing a routine in their otherwise static lives. Through the “My Space” and “Free Space” programs in the female and male section respectively, we have tried to create a space which is independent of restrictions or control over freedom of expression. Through this program, we hope to create an environment suiting the needs of this group where hostile ‘lock ups or barracks’ will be replaced with ‘specially trained’ and friendly caretakers. About 500 women and men have benefited from this intervention.

5. **Economic Rehabilitation:** Koshish aims for the social and economic empowerment of the homeless groups by providing alternate livelihood options, through capacity building initiatives and secure and stable shelter. The process involves a cycle where a person is firstly, prepared mentally to come out of begging and getting ready to work and earn his/her livelihood. This is also the phase where one’s emotional stability is assessed and social skills are developed. It is then supplemented by trainings on life skills which enable clients to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life and get ready for community based rehabilitation. About 300 persons were supported through this particular program.
6. **Strengthening Employer’s Collective:** The employer’s Collective has been constituted with the dual purpose of defending the person in court when charged with begging and also to seek employment for those in need. It’s a group of employers’ mostly from the unorganized sector and some companies and factories as well, who have been brought together to provide placement and job opportunities to people who get released from the custodial institution. As a part of this process, we also educate such potential employers about how the BPBA, 1959 is used to criminalize poor people and they must not hesitate in supporting the person who worked for them or they knew in the event of him getting arrested. About 50 employers are a part of these Collectives and around 500 persons were supported through this during the last two years. We took it as one of the major strategies towards the protection of the rights of the homeless people and so far this group of employers who understand our philosophy, have proved to be a major stakeholder as far as economic stability is concerned. Thus we plan to continue to approach and network with potential employers from various trades.

7. **Release through Legal Aid:** Immediately after the arrest, a person is brought to Receiving Centre to serve the remand period. This is the period when the Social Investigation Report (SIR) is prepared and produced in the court which assists in the determination of what the final court order would be. It is during this period that we investigate, visit employers, families etc, interact with any possible lead and finally submit the SIR to the court through the institution. These reports have played vital role in ensuring the release of a large number of people and securing their legal rights. More than 500 persons received these Legal Aid benefits.

8. **Institutional Placement Program:** All possible attempts are made to reintegrate clients with their families. However, there are situations where the family no longer remained an option for the client to return to due to various reasons. In some cases, families were unwilling to accept them; while in other, clients did not want to return to their families. Few cases did not have any family at all, while still others did not remember the details of the family so they could not be traced back. There were also instances of clients giving the address but we were unable to trace the family. In such situations, institutional placement came up as an effective alternative, especially for women, unless the person was capable enough of independent living. So we did individual planning and shifted them in shelter homes or institutions catering to their needs. Though the institutions take overall responsibility of the client, we support them for specific needs like medicines, travelling, training, provision of special diet, follow up to state a few. About 15 such cases were successfully placed.
9. **Life Skills Training for Residents:** As a part of this initiative, several sessions were conducted where along with talks on need to work, life of dignity, taking personal responsibility, etc. FGDs were carried out with the residents in all these homes; taking their views on the Beggary law and their expectations from the government. This was utilized as a platform for these people to express themselves and also to ventilate their thoughts; which otherwise is difficult. During these FGDs people expressed their aspirations and thoughts about the law freely. About 300 persons participated in these sessions over a period of time.

10. **Vocational Trainings:** This programme was initiated with the idea of rehabilitating the detained clients in custody. The professional skill based training unit set up inside the Beggars' Home provides training options like candle making, incense sticks, liquid soap, phenyl making, greeting cards, tailoring, cooking to mention a few. The primary objective of vocational training was to inculcate a sense of routine and discipline in the lives of the inmates and get them used to regular working hours for their prospective employment and placements.

11. **Recreation and Cultural Activities:** As a part of our efforts towards improving the conditions inside the custodial institutions, activities like sports, street plays, drawing, group picnics, etc. are used as a regular program. These activities introduce a sense of freedom among people while in custody and also enable them to explore and express themselves in better ways. These recreational sessions are conducted on a regular basis for the very purpose of preventing stagnation in people's lives while living in custody. Also, this has helped significantly in checking the aggression and unrest of the care taking staff which has ultimately helped in keeping a check on the incidents of custodial violence. Group picnics of staff and inmates help them bond with each other outside the confines of custody. Given the depressing environment inside the institution as also the abusive background that most of our client group comes from, all these activities were intended to facilitate client’s social skills and repair the emotional strains that they may have suffered. About 300 people were part of these activities on a regular basis.

---

*KOSISH: A TISS Initiative on Homelessness and Destitution 2010-2012*
QUOTES FROM THE TEAM

"My Space is a space for women where they are free and have no restrictions on their activities. Here they do not have anyone to order them, no caretakers. We work with a small group and pay attention to them and interact with them regularly to understand their interests, likes and dislikes. I wish, My Space is converted into a Government shelter in the future"

Pallavi Thakare

"We started taking the residents out for picnics to break the notion that people want to run away. Also, the staff and residents do not interact with each other. This initiative has helped develop their relationship and build trust among them."

Shekhar Thapa

"It was important to open up a therapeutic element to build trust and understanding among people. Counselling complements case work. It helps in identifying people's needs and plan further action. Counselling has also reduced the time period of the process to deal with clients and has also helped in identifying micro issues"

Shahnaz Syed
SAILING THROUGH: SUCCESS STORIES

It is an easy task to comment that people want to earn easy money by being on the streets and begging. But what is difficult is to go out and know their lives and realities. We, at Koshish, have witnessed hundreds of individuals and families establishing themselves with whatever little support we manage to provide to them and are working hard to break the stereotypes created by society about them. A glimpse of some of the cases we worked with...

RESHMA DESAI

Reshma Desai (name changed) suffered from seizures since childhood. She could attend school only up to class four. She stayed with her parents, brothers and sisters in South Mumbai. All her siblings got married but she was forced to remain single due to her physical condition. She spent 40 years of her life in her maternal home. Then for a year she shifted to Delhi with her sister and came back to stay with her brother in Mumbai. At times, she was ill treated by the brother and his wife, but continued to stay there due to lack of alternatives.

When she was nearly 56 yrs old, she got acquainted with her brother’s friend who proposed marriage. She agreed. With the hope of good life, she left with him in the midst of the opposition from her family members. Her husband had a permanent home in south Mumbai and worked as a scrap seller in the local market. He was a severe alcoholic but she had to put up with his habit. Rashmi, on the other hand, continued to do odd jobs to maintain a subsistence life. She spent five year with him in happiness. They went around places with whatever savings they had.

One fine day her husband decided to sell their home in south Mumbai and shift to his village permanently. She was against the idea of shifting to any other place as she was born and brought up in Mumbai. Their disagreement on this issue led to quarrels and finally they broke up. He sold their house and left for his village leaving her behind on the streets.

As she could not approach any of her relatives, she had to stay on the railway platform. For food she depended on the nearby religious places. That way she spent nearly two years of her life wandering on streets, till she was picked up by the police and brought to Beggars Home. She stayed there for a year.

As we worked with the case for a considerable time, we realized that her health was deteriorating and she required to be placed in an
old age home which could cater to her health and other requirements. We tried our best to place her in a renowned home for the aged but she was refused on grounds that she does not seem social enough.

In the mean time, we also traced her sister’s family but they could not accommodate her in their house due to lack of space. Finally we found another old age home to place her and her sister’s family agreed to pay a certain amount on a monthly basis towards her maintenance.

Today she is settled in that home and happy with the facilities provided to her. Her treatment for seizures is being continued and we are providing the medicines on a monthly basis from a nearby BMC Hospital. We regularly follow up on her every 10 days and so does her family.

**Mahalaxmi**

Mahalaxmi (name changed), belongs to Trichy District, Tamil Nadu. She was born into a well to do family, with her father working as a manager in a tea estate and her mother, a housewife. She has two brothers and two sisters. One of her brothers is a real estate agent and the other practices alternative therapies while both her sisters are well placed in marriage. She completed graduation and pursued her Diploma in Beauty Therapy. She was married into a rich family and was a proud parent of a girl and a boy.

For Mahalaxmi her husband seemed to be a very busy man, leaving home early and returning only at night. It was a joint family, but as she shared her in-laws were jealous of her because she maintained a good lifestyle and could speak English. As time passed, the in-laws would complain about Mahalaxmi when her husband returned late at night. This gave rise to constant fights between Mahalaxmi and her husband, so much so that her husband finally divorced her and within no time, he remarried.

She then took her two children and went to stay with her maternal family. Some months later, she managed to rent a place and started running a beauty parlor and stayed there with her children. Very soon she realized that she is unable to provide for the education of her children. With a heavy heart she left her children with her husband and came back to stay with her maternal family. But except the mother, she was ill treated and burdened with lot of work by her own brothers and their wives. She was beaten and thrown out of the house when she asked for a share in the property. With no option left, she started wandering to look for work. Few days later, she got a job as a teacher in a local school. People living in the vicinity realized that she is lived alone, and tried to sexually abuse her. When she complained she was accused of having a bad character and thrown out from there as well.

She wandered for many years before she landed in Mumbai. By then she had lost her mental stability and had started hallucinating. She
remembers having spent a considerable time on Vashi railway station. She begged and survived on 3-4 cups of tea a day and raw grains of rice, till one day she was arrested and brought to female Beggars' Home, Chembur.

Mahalaxmi was a woman who came to everyone’s notice immediately. She greeted everyone with a smile on her face and conveyed that she has come to Beggar’s home for protection. She communicated well in Hindi and English fluently. She took an active part in reading, writing singing and undergoing vocational training programme of small scale industry along with other residents in the Koshish classroom. Very soon she also started helping the Koshish team in translating interviews of other residents. She was one of our best residents and received appreciation not only from Koshish but also from the staff of Beggars' Home.

Once we built a good rapport with her, she was counseled to undertake treatment in the Regional Mental Hospital, Thane which she did willingly. Within a month’s time, we saw drastic improvements in her, her hallucinations had reduced considerably and mentally she was feeling much more stable. Then we started locating her maternal family. We traced her family with the help of the local police. Her brother was helpful and provided us with Mahalaxmi’s son’s mobile number within two days. We contacted him and he was surprised to know that his mother was alive. He was told by his own father that his mother had committed suicide in a hotel room.

Now her son is 24 yrs old, working in the Navy and her daughter is of marriageable age. On his request, the authorities at the beggars' home authorities a medical certificate that she is under treatment, so that he could get leave and avoid his transfer to a far off place as well as continue his mother's treatment. He received Mahalaxmi on the day of her release. Everyone in Beggars' Home was eager to see her son. We had to mentally prepare her to face her son after 7 long years. The moment they met, was something we would cherish for life.

Back with her family today, Mahalaxmi is a happy woman and will soon make preparations for her daughter’s wedding.

Back Home: One of the hundreds of residents of the male Beggars' Home reintegrated with his family on release in Mumbai.
ROSHAN MISTRY

Roshan Mistry (name changed) is an eighty year-old woman. She lived alone and her only daughter was married and had shifted abroad. Due to recession, her husband lost his job and they had to return to India. This was shocking for Roshan's daughter and she started behaving abnormally since then. She suddenly became very religious and spent long hours in the Fire Temple. Due to this, the couple started having fights and finally they moved in with Roshan. The daughter’s husband consulted a psychiatrist and she was on medication. But this affected everyone in the family. The husband’s behavior changed and he started getting irritated and blamed Roshan for her daughter’s behavior. They started ordering food separately for both of them and left Roshan alone to cook for herself.

The situation at home deteriorated as both daughter and her husband fought with Roshan all the time on some petty issue or the other. Roshan tried talking and explaining not to get angry on her and live peacefully, but to no effect. After attempting to solve the problem on her own she finally approached the police, not to take any action against her family but to get support if she needed help as she was scared they would hurt her physically. But the police were not sure how to intervene in the matter and kept assuring her that they will turn up if help is needed.

During the same time, Koshish conducted the police workshop for the central zone in Mumbai. Within a weeks time we received a call from the police if we could help in this case. We asked the police to give the woman our contact number and call us. The woman called us and the next day we decided to meet. Considering the age of the woman, we did a home visit, where we could see for ourselves the condition of the home. As Roshan’s daughter was at home, we took her to a nearby park and she shared with us her problem at length.

We assessed that the problem was that the daughter was not taking medicines regularly due to which there was a delay in her recovery and her behavior led to other problems in the family. We referred the case to Kshitij, and they arranged for an appointment with a psychiatrist and a counselor. The family was asked to come to the organization on the scheduled day and time. The psychiatrist listened to her daughter’s problem and made appropriate changes in her medicine. He also counseled her on the benefits of taking the medicines regularly. Her husband and Roshan were counseled to adjust to their daughter’s behavior till she showed recovery. This intervention helped the entire family.

Today, the daughter has shown improvement with the medicines and they are living a quarrel free life. Kshitij is following up with the case and the family is doing fine. The same was conveyed to the police who had referred the client to Koshish.
Anand Mishra

Anand Mishra (name changed) is a 35 year old man from Uttar Pradesh. He has studied up to class eight in his home town of Deoria. He lost his parents as a child and has been living with his brother, sister-in-law and their children. He worked in a nearby town and came home occasionally.

But few years later, he started behaving abnormally and stopped working. Thereafter he started living with his brother day in and day out. Initially, his brother thought that he should be given time and allowed him to stay home while he went to work. But the severity of his symptoms increased and he started using bad language even for family members and hardly kept enough clothes on his body. This led to a problem as his sister in law refused to stay with him alone in the house. This led to quarrels between the brothers and he left home angrily.

He came to Mumbai and found himself wandering on streets. That is how he was arrested and processed under The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959. Once he was detained, Koshish met him in the male Beggars' Home. As he showed symptoms of aggressive behavior, we took him to the Regional Mental Hospital, Thane for consultation. He started medication and with treatment he showed considerable signs of improvement and participated in all activities of Koshish.

He gave us his brothers contact number and we spoke to him. He was glad to know that Anand is undergoing treatment and doing fine. But he was not very keen on taking him back home. He requested us to look for a job for him so that he could earn and become independent. Anand also shared that he would like to work and earn money and then go back to his village.

Considering his progress, we requested the superintendent not to transfer him to other Beggars' Home as he was under treatment and had responded well. In the mean time, we contacted his ex-employer in Bhiwandi with whom he had worked many years back. Since Anand’s father had worked in the power loom at Bhiwandi and the employer belonged to his village, he agreed to give him a job in his power loom. He agreed to pay him a decent salary with food twice a day. We discussed this with the Superintendent of Beggars' Home and took him for a visit to meet his prospective employer.

On his final day of release from Beggars' Home, we dropped him to Bhiwandi with the same employer. Anand is happy with the work and is continuing his medicines regularly. We consulted a visiting psychiatrist regarding his dosage of medicine, and he was advised to take medicine only once a day as he had shown good signs of recovery. Anand had also been to his village for a week to attend a relatives wedding. He travelled to his village and back on his own. We follow up with him every month and he is also in touch with his brother regularly. Today, he is not only earning but also saves enough for his secure future.
"When I came to Mumbai, I had no idea what I will do, how I will survive, since I did not know anybody and was left alone by an agent who got me here for work. I was brought to the Beggars' Home, where I met the Koshish team. They helped trace my family in my village and helped me return. Even today, the team calls me regularly to know about my whereabouts. I don’t know if I would be alive if the team would not have helped me"

**SUMANBAI, CLIENT, KOSHISH**

"Our work has become much more easier and effective ever since Koshish has started working inside the Beggars' Home. The team is pro-active and ensures regular and proper training and rehabilitation of inmates. I would be happy if Koshish expands work all over the country and helps people create a better life for themselves"

**MS. MONDKAR, FEMALE BEGGARS' HOME**

"I left home when I was 16 to find a job since my family was very poor and we had no livelihood option in our village. I was the eldest son in the family and had the responsibility of taking care of my siblings. I reached Mumbai and did odd jobs at the station to survive, when one day the police caught me and took me to the Beggars' Home. On the first day itself, Koshish team members spoke to me and I told them my story. I wanted to work and they helped me find a better stable job. Today I work as a travel agent in Mumbai and earn enough to send money home and live with dignity. This would not happen without help from the Koshish team. I am indebted to them for life"

**AKASH, CLIENT, KOSHISH**

"Koshish has been a great motivation for us to work inside as well as outside the Beggars' Home. The team adds life to work. The team not only focusses on rehabilitation, but also raises clothes, medicines and other help needed for people. We are always there to support Koshish in any aspect they need us at any time of the day. I feel they should help us know more about the law and the BPBA 1959"

**MR. DHANDE, MALE BEGGARS' HOME**

KOSHISH: A TISS Initiative on Homelessness and Destitution 2010-2012
REACHING OUT: AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

Advocacy forms the stem for each program of Koshish interventions. In order to help the homeless and destitutes; food, health, shelter are main platforms for advocacy. Visits and meetings with concerned officials are regularly conducted with additional awareness workshops and when required or requested. Important workshops are attended to gain deeper understanding of issues and gain solutions.

(A) MAGISTRATE’S VISIT TO BEGGARS HOME

Magistrate from Kurla court visited Beggars' home, Chembur. The visit involved exchanging views on the rehabilitation and legal work within the institution. The magistrate provided advice on making of birth certificates through a certificate from doctors which could act as proof of birth. This suggestion has actively been implemented by Koshish, to provide identity documents issued by the BMC for the homeless and destitutes.

(B) MEETING DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE, DELHI

The director of department of social welfare, expressed interest in studying the works of Koshish in Mumbai. Senior officials from Delhi visited the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai between 10th-12th March, 2010 to reflect on the legislation implemented in Mumbai for homeless and destitutes. Observing the work done by Koshish on homeless clients, the officials decided to replicate the programs in Delhi.

(C) NATIONAL CARAVAN

National Caravan is a collective effort focused on provision of equal platform of opportunities to homeless citizens spread across the country. These citizens are referred as ‘city makers’ to give them their due respect in the society. Koshish facilitated the Mumbai leg of the caravan and hosted them for a visit to Beggars’ home, Chembur. Koshish, as a member of broader alliances on the issues of Urban Poverty, especially homelessness and destitution, supported the campaign to take the issue to wider population and create pressure groups for the establishment of shelters.

(D) MAHARASHTRA MAHILA MAHA PANCHAYAT (MMMP)

MMMP is a network of organizations that have come together to work proactively for women’s issues. Koshish is an active member of this network and has successfully raised the concerns of women on streets and custodial institutions at various forums through the alliance. In the State Consultation meeting held on 8th March, 2010 multiple issues of shelter, health and legal rights were discussed and a Memorandum was submitted to the Government of Maharashtra. Representatives from various political parties were present along with 16 Civil Society organisations. Koshish presented on the issues faced by women in the custodial institutions managed by the state. Koshish together with MMMP are constantly attempting to mutually conceptualised plans for the development of shelter homes for women.

(E) RESEARCH AND STUDIES

We conducted two studies. One was on the status of shelter homes and done on the request of ‘Special Empowered Committee for the Homeless’ and Social Welfare Department to determine the reasons for under-utilization of existing shelters. Second report was the compilation of the cases we represented in the court through our Social Investigation Report. Most of these people were released based on our assessment of the situation that the clients were in. We also did a Qualitative Study based in Bangalore, titled ‘Begging: A preferred way of living or sheer necessity to survive’— An Explorative Study on the Phenomenon of Destitution’ to examine whether or not people resort to begging when all other mechanisms/ systems that help them survive, collapse. We are presently doing this study in Mumbai and Delhi and also plan to do similar studies in few more cities. This will help us build a strong case to advocate for repealing the beggary prevention legislations throughout the country.

KOSHISH: A TISS Initiative on Homelessness and Destitution 2010-2012
WORKSHOPS

Very little is known about the realities of life on street. Moreover, the experience of these groups is important to be captured from their eyes for an unbiassed outlook. Therefore, workshops are conducted for awareness and sensitisation of the masses towards issues of homelessness. These workshops press on matters that can be efficiently dealt by securing people's human rights.

(A) WORKSHOPS WITH MUMBAI POLICE

Following a meeting with the Joint Commissioner of police, the police have been supportive of Koshish and have extended help for ‘night outs’ in terms of safety and security. Several discussions with senior inspectors of Azad Maidan, Marine Drive and MRA marg police stations were conducted. The discussion made Koshish and the Police understand and acknowledge the need to conduct training for its force. It was acknowledged that responding to the issues faced by homeless persons on the streets require certain skills and we agreed to organize trainings with all zones of the city police. Accordingly, workshops were held for south and east region police on 1st December, 2010 and 28th December 2010 respectively which led to examine the views on implementation of BPBA, 1959. Partnerships with police gave way, to reach the homeless and prevent criminalisation. 80 police officers attended each workshop. Techniques like Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) were used for facilitating the aim of the workshops.

(b) WORKSHOPS WITH STUDENTS

Awareness programs on homelessness and destitution were held in three colleges reaching out to more than 300 students. The programs aimed to spread an understanding about the complexities of life on street as well as the influence of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 on the homeless. One such awareness program was held for Masters students of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Swami Vivekanand College and Madras School of Social Work. They visited the beggars’ home and participated in the ‘Night out’ programs. There is growing interest among students to participate in field works of Koshish. Since, 2007 there has been an increase in the number of students for internships from different schools of studies.

(c) VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN CAMPAIGN (VAGW)

The workshop we organized as an active member of VAGW, a network of organizations working towards securing the rights of women, gained tremendous support from field work students to hold awareness campaigns with women between 18-45 years on issues of violence and mental illness. The campaign was held in government and NGO run shelter homes. Plays, clay activity and discussions were structured and implemented to convey the critical aspects of violence. Another campaign focussing on the issues of substance abuse and related voience was held at Azad Maidan, CST. Approximately, 50 people attended the program.

'A session in progress at the police training workshop on Homelessness and Destitution organised at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai'
**SEMINARS**

**(A) NATIONAL SEMINAR ON PROBLEMS OF BEGGARY**

An important aspect of working is continual learning. Koshish attended a three days National Seminar on “The problem of Beggary- Realities, Challenges and Interventions”, held at Kolkata on 20th – 22nd February, 2009. It was organised by Jayaparaksh Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with National Institute of Social Defense, New Delhi. A paper was presented on theme of “Gender Concerns and Problems of Women Beggars”. The contents of the paper were largely drawn from our field experiences and brought out key issues facing the criminalization of poverty in the form of Beggary Law.

**(B) BPBA, 1959 SESSION FOR BAPU TRUST**

Having observed the work done by Koshish, Bapu Trust, invited the team to conduct a session on “How to interpret the BPBA law in the best interest of the residents of beggars’ home”. Through the sessions, experiences of Koshish were shared with the audience.

The session concluded with valuable suggestions from participants to develop our work.

**(C) STREET BUSINESS TOOLKIT**

Saathi an organisation working on the homeless youth arranged a workshop of Street Business Tool Kit for training the trainers. This was attended by the Koshish team, wherein aspects such as content development for youth, facilitation techniques and peer learning were understood. The skills learnt during the session were useful for dealing the homeless youth and youth inside the beggars' home.

**(D) RANGOONWALA FOUNDATION**

In collaboration with Jan Swasthya Abhiyaan, Rangoonwala foundation organised a session on patient rights for trainers at Nariman Point. The workshop reinforced about the rights of people below poverty line and how they could be accessed. About 20 organisations came together to voice their opinions on World Health Day, using various aspects of drama, poster making and group discussion. Similarly, Koshish shared its responsibility for the event and also replicated this event in other areas like CST.
NETWORKING AND ALLIANCES

We are part of the Networks on issues of Health & Mental Health, Food Security, Housing Rights and Urban Poverty. These alliances are being used for assistance in direct interventions for rehabilitation of our clients as well as for purposes of advocacy. These networks include groups of organizations that have come together to provide services and demonstrate models with regard to the interventions concerning the issues of Mental Health, Urban Poor, Food Rights, to state a few.

(A) JAN SWASTHYA ABHIYANA (JSA)

Having realised that resources are not reaching the under-previleged populations, Koshish consciously became an active member of the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA). It is the network of organizations working primarily on the health issues and rights of the Urban Poor. Koshish engages in regular activities that have been developed to educate clients about facilities provided by BMC and government hospitals.

(b) RATION KRUTI SAMITI (RKS)

We are an active member of ‘Ration Kruti Samiti’. The RKS regulates the public distribution system at a zonal level. The knowledge received from scheduled meetings of RKS provides us important information for issuing ration cards for our homeless groups. It also helps in educating the public about their rights and procedures to access them. Strong ties with RKS has enabled us to develop better understanding about the issue of food security.

(c) TIE UP WITH SULABH INTERNATIONAL

One of the major problems that lie within this group is that of lack of an identity document. One of the identity cards that we managed to get for them was from the Sulabh International Toilets. This led to preventing arrests of the people and also provided them with some sense of security and protection from the police. More than 100 such passes were issued.
## Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Remand</td>
<td>2623</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Intervention</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling Home</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers Collective</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repatriation</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to NGO, Shelter, etc</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid for Release</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Help</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Remand Statistics

#### Female

#### Male

### Detention Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Detention</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Intervention</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling Home</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers' Collective</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral for Psychiatric treatment</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/Other Training</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release on Medical Grounds</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to NGO's, Shelter, etc</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid for Release</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Help</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Female

#### Male
SETTING THE STAGE: GOING AHEAD

Given the vital concerns and issues related to the problem, it becomes really critical as to how the law should be perceiving beggary or destitution. At Koshish, we have been witness to some of the most heart breaking experiences that people went through. In a situation where all other efforts for survival have either collapsed or have been criminalized by various legislations, it is essential to examine as to what extent people can actually be held responsible for their being into beggary. Koshish commits itself to continue not only building on the rehabilitation framework that we have evolved but also seek decriminalization with increased intensity.

What we have completed so far, to us, is like an immediate response to emergency situations and we do not categorize this as core impact. Having build on our capacity to respond strongly and with greater influence, the next phase of our work is going to be extremely critical.

While Koshish is now being acknowledged as an intervention model that actually works and enables people to move out of destitution, our focus has been on supporting the homeless by building their capacities through various programs. We do not want to be running this intervention forever. The idea is to make this work people driven. While programs are designed to provide the specific support required, deeper focus is towards building the capacities of people to challenge the systems themselves and fight for their natural rights. Koshish is going to intensify its community work in the next phase of work. While we have strong interventions in custodial institutions, our work with the destitute population on the streets is very limited. While we will continue with our intervention in Beggar's Home to protect people from getting criminalized, we will develop a strong community program, focusing especially around children, to create a holistic program that is capable of responding to the long term needs of people while addressing the immediate threats.

With our 'positive engagement' approach, efforts have been put to make government take up the responsibility and collaborate in the entire process. Government structures and people affected have always been an integral component of all our interventions. To make the government do what was required, it was important to demonstrate through a model and that is what Koshish has done. Now we plan to take our work beyond the areas where we are directly engaged in the field. We have demonstrated how rehabilitation is possible without criminalizing people essentially, and now plan is to share the experience with partners in different parts of the country. We aim to make representations to various state governments wherever beggary law is in force, advocating with them for the change in the law. We already have a very effective network with organizations in different states and we shall now build on that network to lobby with the state governments. We also intend to engage with the judiciary on a more regular basis and seek its support in getting rid of anti-human legislations.

One key area of focus in the next phase, apart from the Community Based Program, Policy Formulation and Law Reform, will be to bring broader intersectoral linkages of different laws and government departments. We will attempt towards getting this Committee constituted by the government where the responsibilities for the poor can be shared and sustainable support be provided. The rehabilitation of destitute population will become much more stable if certain departments within the government like Health, Social Welfare, Women and Child Development, SC/ST Welfare Boards, Education, Labour, etc. can work in coordination.

Students, volunteers and interns have played a significant role in the growth of the program. As we have acquired stability in terms of organizational structure now, we are now looking forward to have a full fledged program with student/volunteers interns. We are all set to launch our 'Youth Engagement Program' where we will create opportunities and ways for the youth from colleges and Universities to engage with us and experience how people struggle to make their ends meet but still get discriminated and labelled. It is extremely important for our young generation to experience and understand what is happening to the poor in this country. Unfortunately, a poor person makes a good scapegoat for most of our policy flaws and institutional, structural deficiencies. We want the youth to understand the facts of street life. This will be an effective way of not only ensuring that they get rid of their prejudices and biases against the poor but also develop into more caring and concerned citizens. This program will be the fulfillment of our commitment of building youth that has a strong sense of justice and fairness.

We realize that it is not going to be easy but having come this far, deriving the strength from the people we work for, we are confident of achieving it certainly. Looking at how optimistic and hopeful the people on streets are, we only feel strengthened. These are the people whose rights are violated every day, who are abused and exploited but they continue to be determined and hopeful for a better future. We can only learn from them and continue with our small little efforts.
Every support, small or big, is significant. Every rupee contributed, every minute spent as a volunteer, every feedback/suggestion made as a well wisher has its impact in the rehabilitation of a person. You are welcome to help us in a manner that suits you best - By being a part of our internship programmes, volunteering for specific programmes, sponsoring medical expenses of clients, supporting repatriation visits, donating, clothes, medicines, etc., donating towards general expenses. Cheques/ Demand Drafts could be given in the name of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai with a covering letter mentioning the contribution towards Koshish.

WE VALUE YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO WAYS OF IMPROVING THE PROGRAMME.

For any suggestions, feedback, information, please feel free to write to us at koshish@tiss.edu

**THE KOSHISH TEAM**

Prof. S Parasuraman  
Dr. Vijay Raghavan  
Mohd. Tarique  

*Back Cover: Painting made by residents of Male Beggars' Home, Mumbai  
Note: All the pictures published in the report are printed with prior approval from all those concerned.*