

Report on

'Night shelter'

NIGHT SHELTER FOR CHILDREN OF SEX WORKERS

Supported by Asha for Education

Period of Reporting: April 2013 to March 2014.

Objectives 1:

To provide an environment conducive for children born to sex workers by keeping them away from abusive language, running errands to get liquor and drugs, physical abuse and above all, a safe environment for joyous learning and ensure a protective environment to them.

Activities and Their Results

- As of the last day of the reporting year, there as many as 42 children in total. During this period, nineteen children have left the centre due to various reasons and twenty new children have been included in the centre. Thus, at the end of the reporting period, there are 42 children in the centre. The details of the status as on 31st March 2014 is given below:

List of children:

Sl. No.	Class	Performance	Others	Old / New
1	VIII	V good	Song, dance	Old
2	V	Good	Dance	Old
3	Centre	Good	Dance	Old
4	III	Good	Drawing	Old
5	Centre	Average		Old
6	VI	Good	Dance	Old
7	ICDS	Average		Old

8	ICDS	Good		Old
9	VIII	Good	Song	Old
10	Centre	Average	Song, dance	Old
11	Centre	Average	Song, dance	Old
12	I	Good	Song, dance	Old
13	I	V good	Drawing	Old
14	III	V good	Song, dance & drawing	Old
15	III	V good	Drawing	Old
16	Centre	Average	Drawing	Old
17	Centre	Average	Drawing	Old
18	ICDS	Average		Old
19	Centre	Good	Drawing	Old
20	VI	Average	Drawing	Old
21	Centre	Average		Old
22	VI	Good	Drawing	Old
23	Centre			New
24	Centre			New
25	Centre			New
26	Centre	Good	Drawing	New
27	Centre	Good		New
28	Centre			New
29	Centre			New
30	Centre			New
31	Centre			New
32	Centre	Good		New
33	Centre	Good	Song, dance	New
34	Centre			New
35	Centre			New

36	ICDS			New
37	ICDS			New
38	Centre			New
39	V	Very good	Song	New
40	I	Good		New
41	ICDS			New
42	Centre			New

List of reasons for children who 'left the centre':

SI	Reasons
1	Selected for vocational training.
2	Selected for vocational training.
3	Admitted to a 'Home'
4	Admitted to a 'Home'
5	Selected for vocational training.
6	Selected for vocational training.
7	Sent to relative's house in native village as he could not be sent to any hostel.
8	Selected for vocational training.
9	Migrated with mother
10	Migrated with mother
11	Migrated with mother
12	Admitted to a 'Home'
13	Admitted to a 'Home'
14	Migrated with mother

15	Migrated with mother
16	Migrated with mother
17	Migrated with mother
18	Migrated with mother
19	Selected for vocational training.

To Summarize

Reasons	Number of Children
Migrated with mother	8
Selected for vocational training.	6
Admitted to a 'Home'	4
Sent to relative's house in native village as he could not be sent to any hostel.	1
Total	19

Every year we try to shift the growing children (12-14 years) from this area. It is always not possible for us to shift all the growing up children and it is a failure of the project. We try to put some of these grown up children for different vocational trainings and try to put some to Government and other Homes. However, the project cannot do anything about the children who migrate with their mothers. Every year mothers migrate when they face with less income. Even sometimes they migrate when they face problems with *masi*, hooligans, moneylenders, etc. Every year we take new substitute children as replacement of those who leave the programme.

The social condition of the area is well known to us all. All the girls are at risk in this area and especially the grown up girls (12-14 years) are much more

vulnerable and prone to abuse, molestation and addiction and forcing them in sex trade. In case of the male children of the same age group the case is not different. These boys are doubly vulnerable. In addition to the risks of the girl children of the same age group, these boys have also threat of becoming anti-socials. They are targeted by the anti-socials and leaders of the groups involved in anti-social activities and various crimes. They slowly ask these boys to do small work and pay for it. Slowly these boys become interested in earning money and gets more and more involved in anti-social activities. Sometimes these gang leaders pay some money to the mother of these boys and obtain their silent encouragement and permission. Hence, this age group of boys and girls are at points of extreme risk of their life. Hence, Nishtha pays a special attention to shift these age group children from this area.

Safe Shelter

The condition of the red light area of Baruipur is so poor that less we speak is the better. No law and order prevails in the area and the whole area is dominated by the anti socials, drug addicts, gangsters and criminals. Drugs, wines and country liquors, are openly sold here and the area is totally avoided by the people of the main stream society.

The clients of the sex workers are from the low economy category of people like rickshaw puller, van puller, etc., the area is dominated and rules by the anti-social elements. As such, the children of the sex workers are extremely vulnerable and they are often molested, abused and even raped by those miscreants. The boy children slowly become drug addict. Hence, in totality, this area is a dangerous place for the children.

Almost all the sex workers are addicted to wine. They take wine at night to avert the tiring effect of their business. Thus, the hangover, etc refrain them to take care of their children during the day time. In other words, the mothers cannot care for their children either at day time or at night and the children are growing up without minimum security and protection and every moment they are prone and vulnerable to all adversities of life.

The project has no hesitation to confirm that the incidences of abuse have gone down considerably. This is because the children come to the shelter in

the evening and do not stay with their mothers at night. They are given tiffin in the evening and given dinner at night. The social workers take their care, help them in studies. They are involved in other activities like dances, songs, etc.

They start morning by brushing teeth, washing mouth and sit for their studies. The social workers escort them to the schools.

It has been observed that there have been some changes in some of the children. They love playing, singing and dancing and even drawing. It is expected that with continuation of these habits, the aggressiveness of these children will go down and will start behaving much properly.

Special teachers have been engaged for the High School going children of the shelter. The children take their breakfast and take tuition from the teachers and go to the school. On returning from the school, they go to meet their mothers and come back to the shelter and have tiffin and again sit for the tuition from the special teachers. At night they take dinner and sleep in the shelter.

The High School going students are studying in the schools where the children of the well off families are also studying. The students are finding interest and they are regular in the schools. This is a very positive progress. This going to school and studying with the children of main society is something special to these children.

The children are spending a major part of their daily time outside the red light colony; thus the shelter is providing much security and protection to these children. Their life is more secured and protected.

As a regular monitoring, the children are now using toilet properly, brushing teeth, combing hair, taking bath, etc. The elder children are fully aware that this habit is for their own benefit and they have to maintain their hygiene for leading a health life.

Mothers' meeting:

Sl	Date	Participant	Issue of discussion
1	22.4.2013	11	Child Protection

2	10.6.2013	14	Personal Hygiene and cleanliness
3	18.8.2013	10	Attitude of mothers towards their child
4	4.12.2013	22	Child Protection
5	15.1.2014	10	Importance of education.

Regular home visits are conducted at the house of each children of the Night Shelter/Day Care. The projects tries to sensitize the mothers to love and care their children against the tortures, punishments, including corporal punishments to the children in the names of teaching them disciplines. The mothers are taught to keep a close eye to their children so that they do not get addicted directly or become passive addicted either. The mothers who are habituated to drinking alcohols heavily, addicted to drugs and keep sleeping till noon are especially sensitized that they should positively drop their children to Night Shelter before they start their business. During the home visits and meetings with the mother, the projects especially lays emphasis and lay stress on the above issues.

There has been an improvement in the attitude and behaviour of the children who are being taught about singing, drawing and dancing and these habits have brought changes in them which is having a very positive impact. They sing on their own when they are alone or doing their own personal work. Now, singing, drawing, etc. have become a part of their daily life to keep their minds cheerful.

At the end of the reporting period we can affirm that a significant change has been brought in the lives of these children. The attitude and behaviours of the older children have changed. The changes can be visualized among them. It appears that they are developing a habit among them. This has been possible due to providing safe shelter and proper care.

Objectives 2:

To admit and help retention of eligible children of sex workers in mainstream schools.

Activities and Their Results

- One group of children is going to school, the second group is going to the ICDS centre and the third groups are studying in the centre itself. The school going students are given all support for their education including tuition classes, helping prepare school tasks, etc.
- The retention of the children in formal schools is also note worthy. Other than the children who had left the centre, all the school going children are going to school. This has been a very noteworthy achievement of the project.
- The status of the students as on 31st March 2014 is furnished in the table below.

Class	Number of children
Centre	23
ICDS Centre	6
I	3
III	3
V	2
VI	3
VIII	2
TOTAL	42

- As a regular activity, monthly meetings are conducted with the mothers. During the year, in total 10 monthly meetings were conducted with the mothers. In addition to discussing various aspects on health hygiene of their children, they are also discussed on their own health, hygiene, cleanliness, etc. In these meetings they are asked to continuously encourage their children to continue their studies so that they can lead a dignified life when they grow up.

Objectives 3:

To distribute educational materials, etc.

Activities

- The school going children have been provided with education materials including books, exercise books, etc.
- Special attention is given to the children to get involved in recreational activities like recitation, singing, dancing, drawing, etc. They are helped to conduct recreational sessions. This practice is being continued for years and is yielding result as these activities makes everybody a part of the group and develops fellow feeling and keeps one's mind cheerful.
- Despite continuous efforts by the project, ill-treatment and teasing by a section of the people to these children cannot be stopped. These people tease the children hinting at their mothers' professions. Whenever the children go out on roads, they faces teasing and ill-treatment by a section of people hinting on their mothers' profession. This has been a major challenge of the project, but inspite of best efforts hardly any improvement has taken place.

Objectives 4:

To involve government authorities and other stakeholders.

Activities and Their Results

- Our society in general is in favour of keep the children of sex workers away from the mainstream society. Rather, a part of them are always in the lookout for looking sending these girls to brothels. They put all efforts to foil Nishtha's work. They take every opportunity to tease and threaten Nishtha staff. Though close relation with the local leaders are maintained, but that could not change them.
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