

# **SINCHAN**

## **DAY & NIGHT SHELTER FOR CHILDREN OF SEX WORKERS**



**Supported by Asha for Education and AID**

**Period of Reporting: January 2012 to December 2012.**

### **Objectives 1:**

To provide a conducive environment 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**

- During the period January to June 2011, the project extended services to 41 children of in total. During the year, seven children have left the centre due to some or other reasons and those have been narrated below. Further, nine new children have been included in the centre. Thus, the previous year's total was 39 children of which seven have left and nine new have been included. Hence, the total numbers of children have become 41. The details of the status as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 is given below.

**List of children (names are not given to maintain child protection policy):**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Old / New</b>
1	VIII	Good		Old
2	VIII	Good		Old
3	VII	Good	Drawing Song	Old

4	III	Good	Song	Old
5	III	V. Good		Old
6	III	Average		Old
7	V	Good	Song	Old
8	ICDS	Irregular		Old
9	ICDS	Irregular		Old
10	V	Good		Old
11	II	Good	Song	Old
12	Centre	Good		Old
13	Left the Centre			Old
14	Centre	Good	Recitation	Old
15	II	Good	Drawing	Old
16	Left the Centre			Old
17	Left the Centre			Old
18	Centre	Good		Old
19	Centre	Good		Old
20	I	Good		Old
21	VII	V. Good	Song	Old
22	II	Good		Old
23	Centre	Good		Old
24	I	Average		Old
25	Centre	Average		Old
26	V	Average	Drawing Song	Old
27	ICDS	Average		Old
28	Centre	Average		Old
29	Left the Centre			Old
30	Centre	Average		Old
31	VI	Good		Old

32	Left the Centre			Old
33	Left the Centre			Old
34	Centre	Average		Old
35	V	Good		Old
36	Left the Centre			Old
37	ICDS	Good		Old
38	II	Good		Old
39	Centre	Good		Old
40	Centre	Average		New
41	V	V. Good		New
42	VII	V Good	Dance	New
43	Centre	V Good	Dance	New
44	Centre	Average		New
45	Centre	Average		New
46	Centre	Average		New
47	Centre	Good	Drawing	New
48	Centre	Good		New

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<b>Black</b>	Old students of 2011 continued in 2012.
<b>Red</b>	Children left the centre during 2012.
<b>Blue</b>	New children inducted in the centre in 2012.

### List of children 'not promoted' to next class:

SI	SI of above list	Reasons
1	2	Stopped studying
2	6	Did not appear for the Annual Examination
3	7	Did not appear for the Annual Examination
4	10	Did not appear for the Annual Examination

5	22	Did not appear for the Annual Examination
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### List of children 'left the centre':

SI	SI of above list	Reasons
1	13	Mother migrated to other brothel.
2	16	Mother migrated to other brothel.
3	17	Mother migrated to other brothel.
4	29	Engaged as labour for earning.
5	32	Helping mother in her business.
6	33	Mother migrated to other brothel.
7	36	Shifted to a hostel in Kolkata.

### Safe Shelter

The condition of the red light area of Baruipur has been narrated on a number of occasions. However, the same is narrated once again in this report. No law and order situation prevails in the area. The whole area is dominated by the anti socials, drug addicts, gangsters and ruthless criminals. Drugs, wines and country liquors, are openly sold here. Since the general public do not enter into the colony and nobody knows what is happening and going on there, this area is a heaven for all antisocial and criminal activities.

Since the clients of the sex workers are from the low economy category of people like rickshaw puller, van puller, etc. the area has remained a heaven for the miscreants. Hence, this area is also vulnerable for the children and they become victims of molestations, abuse and often rape by the anti socials. There is ample scope for temptation of becoming drug addict too. Hence, this area is a dangerous place for the children.

Most of the sex workers are addicted to drinking wine as result they are usually drunken all the time especially at night when they are busy with their business. They tiring business,

fatigue, hand over, etc. leave these mothers tired throughout the day hence they cannot often take care and look after their children during the day time also.

Thus, in a nut shell we can say that there does not exist even slightest feeling of security and protection for these children.

There were incidences of abuse till 2010, but the incidences have gone down considerably during 2011 and 2012. This is because the children come to the shelter in the evening when their mother starts becoming busy with their business. They are given tiffin in the evening and given dinner at night. The social workers take their care, help them in studies, develop the finer senses, develop them to participate in recreational activities, dances, songs, etc. Then after dinner they brush their teeth attends prayer and they go to sleep.

In the morning they brush their teeth, wash mouth and sit for their studies with the social workers. There is a teacher on extra-curricular activities come to the shelter in the morning and teaches the children. One of the social workers escorts them to the schools.

The objective of inducting the extracurricular activities like singing, dancing, recitation, drawing, etc. was to bring about a change in their attitude, behaviour, attain mental peace, and develop fine senses among them. At the end of the reporting period it seems that there have been some changes in minds of some of the children. Now they often sing songs. It was also one of the reasons that with adoption of these activities they will give away their aggressiveness and hostility and be more sober, polite and use non-abusive languages and words, so that one day they build up a good human character and easily become a part of the cultured society.

Four special teachers have been engaged for the eleven children of the shelter who are admitted to the High School, two for the science group and the other two for the Arts group. These children take the breakfast and take tuition from these teachers and go to the school. They take their dinner at schools in the form of 'mid day meal' as provided by the government. 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.

We could not make such arrangements for the students in the past years which did not let much retention in the high schools. This has been the first time that such an arrangement has been made for the High School students and the result has been spontaneous. They

are studying in the schools where the children of the well off families are studying. The students are finding interest and they are regular in the schools as a result the retention is 60%. This is only the beginning and we do not know how far this would continue and be successful, but this is no doubt first step towards success. This going to school and studying is something special to these children. To them it is not for literacy or for an employment, it has a different significance to them. **To them this going to school is struggle for existence to them, earning a respect as a human being beyond being getting known as a child of a sex worker.**

**As a result of this, they are spending maximum part of their daily life outside the red light colony; thus the shelter is providing much security and protection to these children. It is now evident that their life and future is now more secured and protected.**

We regularly conduct monitoring of the children on their healthy habits in the form of going to toilet, tooth brushing, combing hair, bathing, etc. The children are aware that this is a hard rule for their own benefit and they have to maintain their hygiene level. Initially we face tremendous resistance from the new comers who not only express reluctance, but also at times become hostile. Gradually, with great difficulty they are slowly persuaded to adopt hygiene practices.

The song instructor who was engaged during the previous reporting period has been doing a very good job. Though initially he had faced problems and difficulties, but gradually he has caught hold of the situation and has been doing a commendable job. His technique is quite creative and very favourite among children quite nicely. The children are learning rabindra Sangeet songs. There are a few children who have a very good grasping capacity and after a few months they are now singing very beautifully. There has been an improvement in the attitude and behaviour of these children and we believe that their involvement in drawing, recitation, and singing has brought these changes in them is leaving a very positive impact on them. It seems that these children have developed an interest in songs, they sing in their mind when they are alone or doing their own personal work. These children, if could have been supported with technical training on singing, would have shine in their future. These children even may carry on with singing and appear for exams on singing and go a long way, ultimately even to the extent of taking singing as their profession. Singing, drawing etc. have become a part of their life and keeping peace and happiness in their mind.

At the end of the reporting period it is now clear and evident that there has been utter change in the attitude, behaviours and mentalities of these children. We can easily

visualize the difference in those among these children what we watched last years or so. They are now less aggressive, much polite in approach; they can talk to other children properly and not using non-abusive languages. They are developing a habit among them. This has been possible due to proper shelter and care provided in the shelter.

## **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 group are studying in the centre itself. The school going students are given all support for their education.
- The retention of the children in formal schools has gone up significantly. 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. Further they are attending schools regularly, There has been change in the behaviours and attitudes as they are mixing with the other children of the schools.
- The status of the students as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 is depicted in the table below.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
At Centre	17
ICDS Centre	4
I	2
II	4
III	3
IV	0
V	5
VI	1
VII	3
VIII	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>

- As has been normally done in the project, monthly meetings are conducted with the mothers. In total during the year 2012 10 such monthly meetings were done. In addition to discussing various aspects on health, hygiene, cleanliness, follow up their children regularly, etc. The mothers are also discussed about their own health and hygiene. They are encouraged to inspire their children to continue their studies so that they can become a part of the so called civilized and cultured society.
- In addition to these meetings one on one and small sessions, are also regularly conducted with the mothers. During the year 2012, 120 one on one session and 42 small sessions were conducted.

### **Objectives 3:**

To distribute educational materials, etc.

### **Activities**

- As per plan, the school going children have been provided with learning and teaching materials including book, exercise books, etc. for their studies in their respective schools.
- The children were encouraged to involve themselves in recreational activities like recitation, singing, dancing, drawing, etc. They are helped to conduct recreational sessions and participate whole heartedly. 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 free and healthy.
- 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. Local leaders and influential persons were contacted and discussed for few years but without much result. This is adversely affecting the mental development of the children.

### **Objectives 4:**

To involve government authorities and other stakeholders.

### **Activities and Their Results**

- Our society in general is not in favour of bringing the children of sex worker in the mainstream of the society. A section of the society rather is one step ahead. They are looking for the right opportunity to tap and kidnap the girls and put them into the brothels and make them tool for their own sexual enjoyment. They are against Nishtha's staff and social worker. They know that



Nishtha is the barrier between them and their enjoyment. They take every opportunity to tease and ill-behave with Nishtha staff. On occasions they have threatened them too. Hence, special relation with the local leaders, Councillor, and others are maintained. Nishtha knows that they are with Nishtha; but have to work being more careful.

## **CASE STUDY - 1**

Alo is a pretty little and very sweet one. She is good in studies and very good in dance and singing and very interested in cultural activities. She is very spontaneous and full of life. Her mother, Riya is a sex worker and stays in a red light area in Kolkata. Alo stays with her grandmother who was also a sex worker and had given up working due to old age.

Alo is good in studies and very calm and quiet. She is intelligent and loves to dream of one day helping and bringing her mother out of all her sufferings. Seeing her attitude and humble and adjustable nature, Riya thought something strong should be done so that she can live a different life and not like her's. She talked to Nishtha and expressed her desire about her daughter. Nishtha fully supported her and told her that this is what Nishtha's objective is and Nishtha too look for a day when these girl children will become educated and stand on their own feet. Nishtha fully supported her and promised all help and support to this effect. Riya decided to take her away from this area and do everything so that one day she becomes a part of the society and live with dignity.

With Nishtha's support and help, Riya contacted a hostel at Ramnagar village which is run for the children of sex workers only. After formalities, Alo went there in the hostel in October 2012 and started staying there. She was very happy there.

After nearly one month, little change in Alo's attitude and behaviour was noticed. Initially the reason could not be revealed but later it was noticed that she is unhappy there and she despite having very good adaptability, is failing to adjust with the environment there. On discussing with her, Riya came to know that all the boarders there being children of sex workers, their attitude, behaviour, use of abusive languages and words, etc. has put her demoralized and Alo is puzzled and horrified. The atmosphere here is totally different from that of where she had spent last few years. Lastly Alo desperately told her mother to take her away from the hostel. Riya got frightened and apprehending further worsening of mental condition decided to withdraw her from there. Riya brought Alo to Nishtha run shelter and kept her there again. Riya went back to her work place at Kolkata. In December she and Nishtha social workers talked to a boarding hostel at Kolkata and finalized putting Alo there. Later in late December 2012, Riya came to Nishtha and took Alo there and put her there.

## **CASE STUDY – 2**

We have seen and observed that it is a general practice that though the existing law allows the daughters to have equal share of their parent's properties with their brothers, there has been almost only very few incidences in the rural areas where a women is receiving her share of her father's properties. There has been one and tragically the outcome had been more painful for her.

Ruhina is the mother of Akansha, a child who was a member of the Night shelter and is one of the seven children who left the shelter in 2012. Ruhina was doing her business in the red light areas of Baruipur.

She has two daughters, the elder one, Akansha was in Nishtha's shelter and the younger one – only a few months old, was with her.

Ruhina had brothers and sisters at her native village and they did not keep any relation with her after she was forced to adopt the profession of a sex worker. After her father died, her brothers and sisters decided to sell / share his properties as his legal heirs. Accordingly they did the same and gave Ruhina her share in cash as being a sex worker; she will not be able to settle in the native village again. She has got quite some money and she is very happy.

We know that the system in the brothels is controlled by 'Babu' and 'Mashi'. Each of the sex workers has a babu who safe guards her from tortures by gangsters and antisocial, collects clients for her, etc. and in turn he decides and controls the finance and money she earns. Similarly, Ruhina too had a Babu. After Ruhina got the share of her father's property in cash, her Babu took the money from her and said that he will be with her and she do not have to worry for the money or her future. Soon after, the Babu left her for ever leaving behind Ruhina in complete dark. Anti socials and gangsters started coming to her room and spending nights after nights with her without paying any money. She ran out of money. She did not even have money to buy food. She fell sick and became terribly ill losing weight and physical balance. One day Akansha went to her mother in the morning and never returned. Later Nishtha came to know that Ruhina has left the area with her two kids to the Kolkata brothel for secured income.