PRAYAS

SOCIAL WORK IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2000-2001

A Field Action Project of
The Tata Institute of Social Sciences

9/1, B.D.D. Chawls, Worli, Mumbai – 400 018.
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PRAYAS STAFF STRUCTURE

Prison Unit

Mumbai Central Prison

Male Section - Sudhakar Babu
Female Section – Varsha Lad

Byculla District Prison

Sunil Mhaske

Kalyan District Prison and Thane Central Prison

Ravindra Vaidya, Suryakant Mane

Bharuch Sub-Jail (Gujarat)

Male Section – Vithalbhai Solanki
Female Section – Krupa Shah

Family Support Unit

Surekha Sale, Murlidhar Jagtap

Court and Legal Aid

Rajesh Ingle, Chandrakant Shinde

Police Station Unit

Chembur Police Station – Subhash Tupe
Nagpada Police Station – Shobha Shelar
Mahim Police Station – Sangeeta Gawali
C. S. T. Police Station – Silvin Kale, Devchand Randive
Bharuch Police Station (Gujarat) – Krupa Shah

Prostitution Unit

Protective Home – Babita Salvi
Special Juvenile Home – Vasanti Jadhav
Aftercare – Shobha Shelar

Aftercare, Vocational Guidance & Training Unit

Aftercare Male – Vikas Kadam
Aftercare Female – Pradnya Shinde
Vocational Guidance & Training – Shankar Pokharkar, Salma Naik
Pramila Jadhav

Administration Unit

Vijay More, Yallubai Naik

Research and Documentation Unit

T. S. Devayani, Sheron Menezes

Networking Unit

Chanda Jadhav

Project Director

Vijay Raghavan

Project Advisor

Dr. Sanober Shekar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

➢ FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Charitable Trusts and Funding Organisations/Groups

R. D. Tata Trust
Concern India Foundation
Child Relief and You (CRY)
The IndusInd Foundation (Regd.)
Indus International

- Corporate Sector

H.D.F.C.

- Government Support

Central Social Welfare Board

- Individuals

Shri Mehul Kothari
Shri Ashok Sutrale
Shri Pravin Kumar
Shri Bhupendra Jain Mehta
Ms. Chatti

➢ ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

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- The Library
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- FIELD SUPPORT

- Government Bodies

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National Commission for Women
Maharashtra State Women's Commission
Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission
Central Social Welfare Board
Maharashtra State Social Welfare Advisory Board
Juvenile Welfare Board, Mumbai

- Field Based Organisations: Government and Voluntary

  - Shelter Homes

Ashray- Snehasadan
St. Catherine Home
Salam Balak Trust
Asha Kiran – YWCA
Asmita- Snehadadan
Shri Manav Seva Sangh
Kasturba Mahila Vasatigruh
Sukh Shanti
Bal Asha Trust
Saathi, Mumbai
Vatsalya
Ghar Ho To Aisa (Yuva)

  - Information And Guidance

Avehi
ACT
Jawahar Bhawan

- Vocational Training

Maharashtra Vyavasaya Margadarshan Kendra
Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development
Project Mainstreem
Shramik Vidyapith

- Community Based Services

Maitri
C.C.D.T.
Majlis
Prerana
Childline
Samaritans
Prison Ministry of Maharashtra
Nagpada Neighbourhood House
Prem Sagar
Crossroads
Vinimay Trust
Salvation Army REF
Agripada Neighbourhood House
Family Welfare Agency
Special Cell for Women and Children (TISS)
Action Aid
Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation

- Medical Treatment

J. J. Hospital (Psychiatric ward)
Sion Hospital (Psychiatric ward)
K.E.M. Hospital (Psychiatric ward)
Thane Mental Hospital
Poddar Hospital

- Networking (NGOs, District Officials and Individuals)

Lok Vikas Samajik Sanstha, Nasik
Saathi, Pune
Navjeevan Mandal, Pune
Sanlaap, Calcutta

Prayatn, New Delhi
Mahila Uttam Evam Gram Vikas Sansthan, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand
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Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh, Nalbari, Assam
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Ms. Arlene Rego, Bangalore
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Ms. Anjana Sinha, Superintendent of Police, Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh
Shri Ravi Parmar, District Magistrate, Betia, Bihar
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Ms. Sadhana Pathak, Action Aid, Bhopal, M.P.
Shri S.K. Ravi, Action Aid, New Delhi
Shri Harsh Mander, Action Aid, New Delhi

- Staff Development Venues

Yusuf Meharally Centre
J. J. Nursing Association

- Individuals

Dr. George Philips
Shri Satish Shetty
Shri Surendra Gaikwad
Ms. Divya Jain
Shri Vikrambhai (Alka Embroidary)
Shri Suresh Patel (Sonali Matching)
Dr. Machiswala
Dr. Nilesh Shah
Prof. Varke

➢ GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Maharashtra Government

- Department of Women and Child Development

Shri Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary
Shri Panchbhai, Deputy Secretary
Shri C. Turkar, Under Secretary
Shri N. S. Bhavsar, Probation Superintendent

Ms. Mayekar, Superintendent, Protective Home for Women
Ms. Patil, Superintendent, Special Juvenile Home
Probation Officers, Medical Officers, Vocational Instructors, Caretaking and other staff of Protective Home and Special Juvenile Home

Ms. Asha Mukundan, Project Officer
Shri Thombre, District Probation Officer,Thane
Shri Vichare, District Probation Officer, Mumbai

Officers and staff of the Department

- Department of Law and Judiciary

Smt. Pratima Umarji, Principal Secretary
Shri V.G. Munshi, Principal Secretary
Shri Tukrul, Superintendent, Brihanmumbai Legal Services Authority
Shri Pimple, Field Officer, Brihanmumbai Legal Services Authority
Shri Lad, Administrative Officer, Brihanmumbai Legal Services Authority

- Home Department

Shri Mukhopadhyaya, Secretary (Jails and Transport)
Shri. H.B.Tayade, Deputy Secretary
Shri. Subhash Lakhe, Deputy Secretary (Prison)
Shri. S.S. Supe, Desk officer
Shri.S.M.Mane, Desk officer

- Maharashtra Police

Shri Subhashchandra Malhotra, Director General
Smt. Sridevi Goyal, former D.I.G. (PAW)
Smt. Meera Borwankar, D.I.G., C.B.I. (EOW)

- Mumbai Police

Shri N. M. Singh, Commissioner
Shri Pardhi, former Additional Commissioner (Crime)
Dr. Pradnya Sarawade, former D.C.P., Crime Branch (Preventive)
D.C.P.s, Zone II, IV and V
Officers and staff of Zones II, IV and V
Senior Inspectors and staff of Nagpada, V.P. Road, D.B. Marg, Mahim and Chembur Police Stations

1) Thane Police

Shri Suresh Shangari, Commissioner
Shri Vijay Kamble, Additional Commissioner
Shri Ashok Deshbhratar, D.C.P. (Crime)
Shri B. B. Yadav, A.C.P., Ulhasnagar
Senior P. I., Ramnagar Police Station

- Government Railway Police, Mumbai

Shri S. Chakravarty, Special I.G.
Shri Rakesh Maria, Commissioner
Shri Khopkar, P. A. to the Commissioner
Shri R. S. Tadvi, former Senior P.I., C.S.T. Railway Police Station

Senior Inspector of Police and staff of C.S.T. Railway Police Station
Senior Inspector of Police and staff of Central and Western Railway Police Stations.

- Prison Department

Shri T. Singarvel, Additional D.G. and I.G.
Shri Ashok Kinninge, D.I.G. (Southern Region)
Shri G. Vettikunnel, Research Officer

Shri Kishore Mahure, Superintendent, Mumbai Central Prison
Shri Nikam, Sr. Jailor, Mumbai Central Prison
Shri B. S. Swami, Sr. Jailor, Byculla District Prison
Shri Yogesh Desai, then Superindendent, Kalyan District Prison
Shri C. S. Shiwale, Acting Superindendent, Kalyan District Prison
Shri R.B.Mahale, Superindendent, Thane Central Prison
Shri Kale, Sr. Jailor, Thane Central Prison
Ms. Palavi Kadam, Jailor, Yerawada Central Prison (Female Section)

Jailors, Judicial Section and Guarding staff of Mumbai Central, Byculla District, Kalyan District and Thane Central Prisons.

- Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation

Shri V. Ranganathan, former Commissioner
Dr. Alka Karande, Deputy Executive Health officer
Ms. Jyoti Pandya, Chief Community Development Officer
Ms. Sadhna Adarkar, C.D.O.
Shri Rajendra Sonawane, C.D.O.

- Hon'ble Members of the Judiciary, Mumbai

Hon'ble Justice Shri A.S.Aguiar, Mumbai High Court, former Principal Judge, City Civil and Sessions Court
Hon'ble Shri Abhay Thipsay, Additional Sessions Judge, City Civil and Sessions Court
Hon'ble Shri M. L. Tahiliyani, Additional Sessions Judge, City Civil and Sessions Court
Hon'ble Shri M. N. Geelani, Additional Registrar, Mumbai High Court
Hon'ble Shri T.V.Nalawade, former Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Mumbai
Hon'ble Shri P.M. Bansod, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate and Member Secretary, Brihanmumbai District Legal Services Authority
Hon'ble Shri Ramesh Gandhi, Principal Judge, Small Causes Court and Member Secretary, Mumbai Suburban Legal Services Authority

Hon'ble Shri K.H. Holambe-Patil, Additional C.M.M., formerly of Esplanade and now Girgaon Court,
Hon'ble Shri C.L.Thool, Additional C.M.M., Esplanade Court
Hon'ble Shri P.J.Shah, Metropolitan Magistrate, Esplanade Court
Hon'ble Shri M.R. Puranik, Metropolitan Magistrate, Esplanade Court
Hon'ble Shri Jagiasi, Metropolitan Magistrate Esplanade Court
Hon'ble Shri S. Pednekar, Registrar, Office of the C.M.M., Esplanade Court
Hon'ble Shri Taware, Additional C.M.M., Bandra Court
Hon'ble Shri M.W. Nayak, Metropolitan Magistrate, Borivali Court
Hon'ble Shri Mhaske, Metropolitan Magistrate, Vikhroli Court

Hon'ble Shri Borikar, Judge, Palghar Sessions Court
Hon'ble Shri Suhas Barve, District & Session Judge, Thane
Hon'ble Shri M. N. Godbole, District & Session Judge, Raigarh
Hon'ble Shri Shanbaug, Additional District & Session Judge, Kalyan
Hon'ble Shri Rawale, J.M.F.C., Kalyan
Hon'ble Shri Ghumare, J. M. F. C., Kalyan
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- Government Law College, Mumbai

Prof. Ms. Parimala Rao, Principal
Prof. Ms. Chugani, Project In-Charge, Prison Legal Guidance Project
Prof. Shinde .
Shri Kunal Vajani, Student Coordinator
Ms. Sweta Gabhawala

➢ Advocates

Shri Ashok Sutrale
Ms. Anita Kewalramni
Ms. Amina Iqbal
Shri Prasad Iyer
Shri R. Satyanarayan
Shri Atul Wagh
Ms. Rohini Wagh
Shri Ashok Sahani
Shri V. S. Joshi
Shri P.S. Singh
Shri Gangadhar Shinde
Ms. Chitra Bagarka
Shri Ramakant B. Yadav
Shri H. R. Hanchate
Shri N.N. Gawankar
Shri Sanjay Kumar
Shri Rajesh Asmar
Shri Sunil Lasure
Shri Manoj Mhatre
Shri Prakash Patil
Shri Prajapati
Shri M. M. Parkar
Smt Padma Patil
Shri D. M. Patil
Shri Hitendra Mhatre
Shri Harshal Patil
Shri Chetan Bane
Ms.Shri Sunanda Barve
Shri Milind R. Deshpande
Shri Anand B. Mali
Shri Hitendra Mhatre
Shri Hahire

Bharuch Unit

➢ Government Departments and Officials

- Shri B.B. Swain, former District Collector

- Police

Shri C.R. Parmar, former District Superintendent
Shri Natwarsingh Solanki, former District Superintendent
Shri M.D. Antani, District Superintendent
Shri G.N. Chavda, former Police Inspector, 'A' Division Police Station
Shri Aziz Sindi, Police Inspector, 'A' Division Police Station

All Police Inspectors and staff of City 'A' Division Police Station

- Prisons

Shri Maniram, I.G. Prisons
Shri C.K. Patel, Superintendent, Bharuch Sub-Jail
Shri M.D. Doshi, Jailor
Shri H.R. Parghi, Senior Clerk
Staff of Bharuch Sub-Jail

- Juvenile Justice

Shri Bharatbhai Thakkar, Superintendent, Observation Home

- Judiciary

Hon'ble Shri R.D. Kothari, District and Sessions Judge
District Legal Service Authority

- Advocates

Shri K.R. Joshi
Ms. Purvi Ghanoa

- Field Organisations

Shri Mohammed Farsiwala, Bharuch Welfare Hospital
Mahila Kanooni Salah Kendra
Centre for Social Justice
Fr. M.V. Joseph, Free Legal Aid Office, Ankleshwar
Shri Sharma, Manav Seva Kendra, Kandvi

All Clients of Prayas and their Families

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the eleventh year of Prayas' work. As the years roll by, putting together an annual report becomes more and more painstaking. Our total staff strength is thirty. In Mumbai, we are working in four prisons, four police stations, two institutions (for women and girls), one court cluster and have our own rehabilitation centre in Worli. In Bharuch, we are working in one prison, one police station and coordinating the women's cell attached to the DSP's office.

Our documentation and research work is about to produce two books – one on the situation of children of prisoners and another on the rehabilitation of women and girls released from institutions. A third one on initiatives in the rescue and rehabilitation of women and girls in prostitution is being planned.

We are invitee members to a few government appointed committees – Inter Departmental Committee at Maharashtra and Mumbai level, Brihanmumbai Legal Services Authority, Guidance and Monitoring Committee of the Special Home for Minor Girls and the Core Committee on Under Trial Prisoners in Bharuch District.

Our staff is being invited to talk about their work in various fora – training institutions (for social workers, police, government departments), NGO networks, community associations, etc. We are also actively participating in seminars and workshops organised by those associated with or working in the field of criminal justice, rehabilitation, human rights, legal issues, etc.

We are networking with NGOs, individuals and government officials/departments towards the repatriation and rehabilitation of our clients in other states such as West Bengal, Orissa, U.P., M.P., Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc. We are also liaising with national and state bodies such as National Commission for Women, National Human Rights Commission, Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women and State Commission for Women to highlight problems faced by our client groups or issues relevant to rehabilitation.

One of our focus areas this year has been the economic self-reliance of our client group. This involves training, re-training and accessing schemes of government and non-government programmes for the benefit of our clients. Towards this end, we have started a process of sensitising these agencies to

the needs and problems of our client group. The same process comes into play when we are trying to access community resources for our clients such as shelter, medical services, education trusts, etc.

We are continuously trying to take field issues to the higher levels of government towards policy change. This involves documenting our work, preparing notes and drafts, sending letters, attending meetings, seeking appointments and follow-up with officials.

We have started a process of consultation and review of our approach to rehabilitation with those who been helped by us – our clients. This year has been a year of continuous review of our work in aftercare, which has led to a framework for analysing our intervention. This review has been carried out in small sub-groups as well as in the entire team through our staff development workshops.

As the work has expanded, the need for financial support has also increased. Fund raising is a year long process for us. It involves continuously identifying sources of financial support, finding out their area of focus, explaining our work to them, writing proposals and reports and maintaining contact with them. An effort is also being made to generate funds through internal processes such as sale of our products, individual small donations, collection and sale of used items, etc.

Writing an annual report which adequately covers all these areas of our work without getting too detailed is the challenge we are faced with. We hope we are able to rise up to it and our report makes interesting reading and food for thought for you.

(Vijay Raghavan)
Project Director

II. PRISON UNIT

Introduction:

Our work in prisons has now expanded to four prisons in Maharashtra and one in Gujarat (Bharuch district). Till last year we were based in Mumbai Central and Bharuch Sub-Jail. We started work in Thane district in November,1999 and soon received permission to work in Thane Central and Kalyan District Prisons. In January, 2001, we started work in Byculla District Prison, with the permission of the Prison Department. With this, we are now covering all the prisons in Mumbai and Thane. We still do not have a worker based in the Women's Section of Kalyan Prison and plan to fill this gap soon.

In Mumbai Central Prison, from where we started our journey in this field eleven years ago, the situation saw many changes during this year. The Women's and Male Adolescent Barracks have become very overcrowded. In the Women's Section, the average population is touching 150 and has gone upto to 180 at times. In the Male Adolescent Section, there used to be two barracks with a population of 150 plus in each barrack. However, the Prison Department decided to shift those under trials charged with petty offences to Byculla District Prison some months back. Therefore, the population in one barrack in the Male Adolescent Section is around 180.

This overload was causing a lot of strain on the prison services and diluting the efforts taken by us. Our staff was inadequate to handle this kind of case load. Our individualised approach in casework was giving way to provision of services such as writing applications, legal aid, home visits, making phone call to family members, etc. on a mass scale. After a point, such services could not be co-related to rehabilitation work, as there was no time left to do in-depth work with individuals such as counselling, discussions around rehabilitation and follow up of sessions.

Our legal aid worker went on long leave due to health reasons, and as a result, the load on our prison worker doubled. For a long time, we had been feeling that the work we were doing in the area of legal aid and guidance was to fill a gap in the field, and it was in our interest to find institutional mechnisms to deal with the problem.

We brought up the issue of lack of adequate legal services for under trial prisoners in the Inter-Departmental Committee (set up under the directions of the Mumbai High Court). Discussions in these meetings led to two developments – a decision to allow law college students to do field work in prison and an overhaul in the administrative structure of the government legal aid board.

We followed up the first decision by starting a collaborative project with the Government Law College in Mumbai. Under this project, senior students of the GLC would visit the Mumbai Central Prison twice a week to do legal guidance work and write applications on behalf of the prisoners. This project has been going on for two years now. It has had its share of teething troubles, but the heartening fact is that the project has not fizzled out. The next batch of students will begin work in July,2001. This project will be reported in detail on our section on 'Court and Legal Aid Unit'.

The second outcome of the IDC discussions – of strengthening the government legal aid machinery – is being followed up by us. We have had regular meetings with the staff and office bearers of the Mumbai Legal Services Authority to work out areas of collaboration. We have referred cases to their legal aid panel and organised a legal awareness camp in the Women's Section of the prison with them. These developments would be reported in detail in our section on 'Court and Legal Aid Unit'.

A. Work in Mumbai Central Prison:

Male Adolescent Section

As mentioned earlier, work in this section with youth under trials is initiated through legal guidance and counselling. Discussions with them centred around their cases – whether bailable or non-bailable, need for a lawyer, writing applications, follow-up with their lawyers, etc. During discussions, it was our endeavour to find out about their social supports available outside and to build a relationship with them. There were two category of clients – local and upcountry i.e. those who have families or are settled in Mumbai and those whose families live outside Mumbai/Maharashtra or do not have a fixed place of residence in the city (as they may be recent migrants).

The following requests have been made by upcountry clients:

1. Requesting for help to them get released on personal bond – by writing applications for them addressed to the magistrate or by meeting the magistrate.
2. Arranging temporary shelter for them after their release.
3. Contacting their employer and requesting him to help with bail.
4. Requesting to arrange for medicines from outside or for admission to the prison hospital.

The worker in prison deals with these requests keeping in mind his goal to build a positive relationship with the client. For example, a client named Haroon Ali had contracted jaundice. Our worker spoke to the medical officer in prison and after discussions with him, he was transferred to the Kasturba Gandhi Hospital for Infectious Diseases from the Prison Hospital. While in hospital, the boy was missing his family and friends and feeling very lonely. Our worker met him in hospital every day and kept regular contact with the doctors. He accompanied him to Nair Hospital for his HIV test. As a result of these efforts, Haroon developed a positive relationship with Prayas. After his release, he came to Prayas. He requested for a camera, as he was a photographer before his arrest (he used to click photographs of pilgrims coming to Haji Ali for a fee). Seeing him, his friends in prison too approached Prayas with a desire to start life afresh after their release.

Out of the requests mentioned above, we do not accede to any requests for bringing medicines from outside (it is not permitted as per prison rules). We are also very careful with any requests made by clients to contact their friends outside. We check out with them whether these friends have any criminal links. We usually ask the client to give us the address of some family member, employer, community member ('biradariwala'), etc. If he says that he has no one in Mumbai apart from some friend, then first, we try to convince ourselves this friend is not some anti-social element. On a rare occasion, when on reaching the place, a doubt has arisen in our mind about the authenticity of the person, we have turned back without meeting the said person and confronted the client about trying to mislead us.

In local cases, work with family becomes a major focus of intervention. Initially, the client requests the worker to visit his family for the following:

1. Informing them about his case details, bail and transfer to prison from the lock-up.
2. Helping them arrange for a lawyer and giving them proper legal guidance.
3. Convincing them to come to meet him on his court date or in prison.
4. Convincing them to get him released on bail.
5. Helping to repair broken relationships at home.
6. Discussing with the family about the client's intention to change his lifestyle.
7. Giving financial assistance to the family or helping one member of the family to find a job (as he was the main bread winner before his arrest).

Once a relationship with the client develops, the worker pays a home visit for the following reasons:

1. Discussing with the family about options after release -- in terms of education, training, job, etc.
2. Discussing with the family about the work of Prayas and Umang to help in the client's rehabilitation.
3. Getting information about the client's past life – his education, work history, lifestyle, habits, behaviour, hobbies, talents, etc.
4. Working out a joint plan of action towards the client's rehabilitation.

Apart from casework, the worker also conducts groups sessions with the client group in prison (both upcountry and local). Discussions on friendship, love, family are often animated and helps the worker to gauge the thinking and attitude of his client group. He also conducts indoor games, competitions, creative and poetry writing sessions, painting and craft sessions, etc. The objective behind these sessions is to try to change the negative environment in prison and discover the hidden talents of the clients. The effort is also to increase their self-esteem and a sense of achievement. Information is given about Umang and their writings are published in Umang Patrika, which acts as a source of encouragement.

As mentioned earlier, students of the Government Law College visit the prison give legal guidance to prisoners. When students come, our worker along with the prison staff, makes arrangements for their seating, helps them in understanding the legal problems of prisoners, writing applications and reading out the applications to the prisoners. He also attends any meetings organised on the issue with the GLC authorities, Prison Superintendent and

hold discussions with the Barrack Jailor, Literacy Teacher and Prayas staff whenever necessary.

Some Observations :

We have found that upcountry clients come to Mumbai in search of jobs, attracted by the Hindi film world or simply to 'see' the city. Many boys from West Bengal come during their vacation from school (to earn some money). We have found that upcountry youth have a lower self-esteem than local cases. Lack of family supports and loneliness could be major reasons for this.

They are often involved in love affairs with married women working in beer bars. Being away from their families, they seem to be seeking out women who would give them love and understanding. Due to lack of supports and a base in the city, they feel unable to find 'normal' girls/life partners and visit beer bars and red-light areas in search of their 'love'. Many of them are addicted to alcohol or drugs. One also finds such boys having homosexual partners.

There is an underlying feeling of questioning their masculinity, and consequently, a determination to prove themselves in the 'male' world. In trying to prove themselves to be more 'male', they get hooked on to a lifestyle which revolves around male success symbols – money, sex, gambling, drinking, friends, etc. They want to become somebody and earn a name for themselves, whether it through good or bad deeds ('sudharkar ya phir bigadkar'). They dream of a day when their name would be flashed in the media. They wear flashy clothes, throw money on friends and women and live a life very close to what they see in films. Having taken the decision to leave their families, they now have to live up to their expectation of making it in life.

On account of the fact that upcountry youth are used to earning for a living, they find work in prison too. They get involved in distributing food ('bhatta'), working in the kitchen, laundry section, gardening, etc. They do not have status problems (as opposed to local youth) in doing menial jobs and can work hard if it pays.

In terms of post release plans, those arrested for petty offences want to return to their native place (if they have not made friends with some

'influential' or habitual offenders, who are willing to support them outside). Those arrested under serious sections like robbery, extortion, etc. obviously were leading a criminal lifestyle before their arrest. In their case, it is not easy to predict what they would do after their release.

The local youth usually try to maintain their links with their families, even if relationships at home were strained or broken before their arrest. They try to use our worker to pressurise the family to bail them out. Those who were employed are preoccupied with whether they would be re-employed or get new employment after their release. If the family does not come to meet them in prison or in court, they get very depressed and tensed. In the absence of family support, they tend to make friendships inside to get released on bail, to hire a lawyer or to find shelter/employment after their release. In prison, they usually stay in a group, sometimes getting involved in gambling activities to pass time and these relationships could keep them in crime after their release.

Those youth whose cases have been committed to sessions court (such as robbery, kidnapping, murder, attempted murder, rape, kidnapping, etc.) and chances of their going out on bail are remote, try to get used to the idea of prolonged imprisonment. In such cases, it may take as long as three to five years for their trials to get over. They try to take it in their stride and to keep their spirits up, get involved in prison work. They also participate in the activities conducted by our worker – drawing, painting, craft, music, dance, discussions, etc. Some of them become loners and spend their time thinking, reading, writing, walking inside the barrack and helping the new entrants in prison to adjust to the prison environment.

Future Plans:

We have been feeling that the time spent by the youth in prison is crucial from the point of view of rehabilitation. It is clear from the above discussion that one of the most significant factors abetting criminalising forces is the issue of loneliness experienced in prison. This is particularly true of youth without family support. Friendships and obligations made in prison often lead to a life of crime outside. This is the main reason why we spend a lot of our time and resources on home visits, legal aid and group sessions. We have now come to a conclusion that activities in prison need to be bolstered up.

Apart from recreation, activities should also focus on vocational guidance and training. Thus, the ground-work of rehabilitation can be done inside prison. Regular programmes and activities should be conducted. Use of audio-visual media, lecture cum discussions, games, and self-learning exercises would help in changing the environment in prison. The objectives of conducting activities in prison could be specified as follows:

- To open up the minds of the youth.
- To help uncover their hidden talents and skills.
- To demonstrate possibilities and options other than a life of crime.
- To give information about government and non-government schemes about training, self-employment, loan, savings, medical facilities, etc.

It has been decided that each training programme conducted should lead to a certificate (preferrably government recognised) for the trainees. This would help increase their self-confidence and re-start their education process. Our worker has contacted and visited the following training organisations to do the spade- work in this connection:

1. National Job Development Centre
2. Swarna Jyanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana
3. Niral Business Centre
4. Navnirman
5. Vocational Guidance Centre (Department of Technical Education, Govt. Of Maharashtra)
6. Maharashtra Vyavasaya Margdarshan Kendra
7. Aakar Bharti
8. Abinav Technical Institute
9. Avehi
10. Sterlite Foundation
11. Yusuf Meherali Centre
12. Regional Technical Institute (Ministry of Textiles, Government of India)
13. Dr. Moghe's Gardening Classes
14. Maharashtra Entrepreneurship Development Institute
15. Shramik Vidyapeeth

We are also developing our knowledge and data base on small business enterprises to be able to guide our client group in this regard. We are trying to build a resource base of persons already doing such businesses with some measure of success, who could act as guides to our clients. A team consisting of two workers and our project advisor has been constituted for this purpose.

Female Section of Mumbai Central Prison

During the past one year, majority of the women under trials who approached us for help were arrested for cheating (u/s 420 of IPC) , murder (u/s 302 of IPC), and theft and house breaking (u/s 379, and 380 of IPC). Services have been provided based on the stated needs of clients, and particularly to those who are economically weak and in urgent need of assistance. We have also been working with prisoners' families, providing assistance in areas such as education, training, and legal assistance.

The prison worker generally focussed on four areas:

1. Prisoners' rights like legal aid, writing applications to magistrates, etc.
2. Paying home visits, meetings with magistrates to discuss cases being produced before them, or visit the police stations concerned.
3. Services promoting rehabilitation of women prisoners. In some cases, the worker is required to provide short-term services or respond to emergency situations that may arise. In other cases, the client-worker relationship gets extended over a longer period of time, where the worker slowly builds a relationship with the client, discusses problems presented by the latter, and works on issues significant to rehabilitation.
4. Working with the prison system on different issues like arranging escorts, mulakats (prison meeting between the woman prisoner and her family), health problems of the prisoners' etc.

Some cases we have been working with:

1) While most persons we work with are prison inmates, here was a case of a woman, who was not an inmate, but whose husband was in prison. The case was referred to us by the Special Cell for Women and Children (another project of TISS, which works with Mumbai Police on violence against women and children). They had come across a woman and her daughter, who were in need of shelter and were referred to a women's institution in Mumbai.

We were requested to meet the husband and inform him about his wife and daughter and also seek his suggestions. As he was not lodged in the barrack we are based in, special permission was sought to maintain contact with him. While our social worker had taken up his case for further intervention, he

realized working with this person alone would not be sufficient. His family was going through a difficult phase and required support.

The man in question was charged under section 324 of I.P.C. He, along with his wife and child lived with his father. Following a quarrel with his father, they were asked to leave the house. The couple, now homeless, somehow managed by staying in a vacant veranda in a building. It was somewhere then that the man was arrested, after he got into a fight with someone.

Meanwhile she was having problems adjusting to the Home and was asked to leave the place. The authorities were willing to keep the child with them, until some arrangements were made for her. She was thus referred to another institution. She fell ill and was diagnosed to have been suffering from tuberculosis. We therefore, arranged for her to be admitted at the T.B. hospital in Sewri.

After her condition improved, she expressed a desire to start working. Our worker managed to find her jobs as a domestic maid on two occasions. However, since she could not get along with her employers, she left. Now, most institutions in Mumbai were not willing to give her shelter as she was suffering from T.B., and they feared that she would infect other residents.

With great difficulty, arrangements were finally made for her stay in a hostel run by Y.W. C. A. We were asked to pay Rs.50/- per day to meet her expenses. We agreed to do so. Our worker maintained contact with her so as to discuss her future plans. It appeared as if she had adjustment problems which affected her relationships. Thus, concerted efforts were made to make her aware of certain aspects of herself and work towards personal growth.

She once again started feeling the need for working and supporting herself. Given her health problems, whether this was a healthy decision, was being explored by us. Meanwhile she made arrangements for her employment elsewhere. Our worker in the Male Section continued contact with her husband till his release from prison. After many home visits and counselling sessions with the couple and the husband's father, they decided to stay together in the father's house.

2) In another case, a 19-year-old girl was arrested for theft. Our worker was able to build a relationship of trust with her. She came to know that the girl did not have parents or any other relatives. A lady had brought her up since

she was two years of age. When she was grown up, this lady placed her in a beer bar. While working in the bar, she was arrested for theft.

When she came in contact with our social worker, she gave details of her foster mother and her address. But, when the worker paid a home visit the above-mentioned lady was unavailable as she had gone to her village.

Counselling sessions commenced and she was encouraged to concentrate and participate in training activities conducted by us in prison. The worker discussed with her about her present profession. She was slowly motivated to leave the profession, and also complete her training in tailoring while in prison.

Meanwhile, legal aid was provided for her, and the worker also informed her about the possibility of being released on probation. The case was presented before the magistrate, explaining that this case was deserving for probation. The girl was referred to a probation officer by the magistrate and later released on probation. Follow-up is being maintained with her after her release from prison.

3) A woman, arrested for the murder of her husband, had been in prison since the past six years. The worker felt that something should be done in this case. Her maternal family's condition was very poor. The court had granted a bail of Rs. 10000/-. Since the family was not in a position to pay the bail amount, she was in prison all these years.

As she was arrested in her husband's murder case, there was no support from her in-laws. Her mother was helping her as per her capacity. Prayas has arranged for her legal assistance. Her case is pending in Palghar Sessions Court. Escorts to accompany her on court dates are not easily available, due to which there has been a delay in her case.

Her case is nearing completion. After her release, she has requested that arrangements be made for shelter and employment.

Activities and training:

Our activity worker has been involved in planning and organizing vocational training in the prison. The worker visited many training institutions like Shramik Vidyapith, MAVIM, SNDT, Vocational Training Institute, etc. The

purpose of the visit was to find out different training programmes for the prison inmates. Though our worker has been conducting activity classes on her own, we decided organise vocational training programmes conducted by professional organisations in the prison.

We organised a three-month tailoring course in the month of June, 2000, in collaboration from Shramik Vidyapith, Dharavi. This tailoring course included diagrams, cutting and sewing. We started the course with the group of 25 female prisoners, but only 9 of them have received the proper training and have received certificates for it. 8 of them were transferred to Yerawada Central Prison in Pune and the others were released on the bail. Shramik Vidyapith has decided that those who have gone out on bail can come to their institute and can complete the course.

Consequently, the worker made a list of the female prisoners who were released from prison before completion of the course, of those who were from Mumbai and those residing outside the city. Accordingly, she visited those living in Mumbai and wrote letters to those outside Mumbai city, with the purpose of informing them about the possibility of completing training at the given institute. While visiting the clients' homes, the worker learnt that some of them are working as full-time domestic workers (as the economic condition of their families was weak). Some of them were not available on the first visit. Some of them had just been released from Yerawada Prison.

As per the future plan, contacts were made with different institutions that could provide vocational training in the female section. MAVIM asked us to submit a proposal in this regard. Maharashtra Vocational Training Centre conducted a Certificate Course in Flower Making. The duration of the course was 15 days, and 25 female prisoners completed the course. Plans are on to organise a jewellery making course next. Thus, contacts are being built and regular training programmes are being conducted.

As a part of our work, a team of Prayas workers met the Prinicipal Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Maharashtra and discussed the issue of starting a Balwadi inside the prison, facilities for children of prisoners left outside and also starting vocational training programmes in the female section. At the request of the Principal Secretary, Prayas prepared a note on women prisoners, released women prisoners and children of prisoners and submitted it to him, after obtaining the comments of the I.G. Prisons on our note. This was done to include policy suggestions

for this group in the new Policy for Women that the Government of Maharashtra is coming up with.

B. Work with the Probation System in Thane:

We started work in Thane district in November, 1999. Permission was granted by the I.G. Prisons to visit Thane Central and Kalyan District Prisons. The objective of starting work here was to look at the implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 and find ways to improve the functioning of this system. It is a known fact that a large number of under trials, who could benefit from this system, are being left out due to poor implementation of this act.

As per the above objective, we were permitted by the Directorate of Women and Child Development to visit and liaise with the office of the District Probation Officer, Thane. In the first phase, our worker based himself at the DPO's office. We got an opportunity to go through the official records, discuss with the probation officers about their work, visit probationers' homes and meet magistrates and judicial staff in courts. This opportunity helped us to gain a through understanding about the functioning of the probation system as it exists.

Our worker paid visits to the homes of more than fifteen probationers to interact with them and their family members, to get a feel of the ground level realities. Our first impression after these visits was that the expectation behind giving the benefit of probation to an accused person had been fulfilled. The ideology behind this act stems from a belief that imprisonment as a form of punishment is not necessary all cases, and there can be many persons who could be given community based treatment.

On studying the nature of the offence committed, character of the offender and the circumstances under which the offence had been committed, our worker came the conclusion that in all these cases, probation was not desirable as an option but imprisonment would have had a negative impact on the person. The offences committed by them were of theft of petty sums of money, cheating of a few hundreds, rash or negligent driving, possession of unauthorised weapons like knives, neighbourhood disputes/fights, etc. None of them or their families had any association with criminal activities or any past criminal record, and most of them had a definite and honest source of income.

On the basis of the facts mentioned above, one may come to the conclusion that the working of the probation system is satisfactory. But that would be, in our opinion, doing an injustice to the core ideology of the Act. It would amount to an undermining of the scope and intention of the P.O. Act. In all the above-mentioned cases, the accused were released under section 4 of the Act i.e. released under supervision of the probation officer for a fixed period of time.

Many of them could have been simply released under section 3 i.e. admonition and warning, and that would have sufficed as a punishment for them. Registering of a criminal offence against them and their subsequent arrest would have been deterrent enough for them. The issue under discussion here is of punishment being proportionate to the offence committed.

Our observation is that very few cases are released under section 3 of the Act. The accused are either released under section 4 (release on probation of good conduct with or without supervision), or not given benefit of probation at all. Probation officers and the judiciary, by and large, feel that only those found/pleaded guilty of petty offences, being first time offenders and having good family background could be considered for probation, and that too under section 4.

It is therefore, not clear to us as to who should be given benefit of probation under section 3 (admonition and warning). In our opinion, this amounts to bad practice, as section 3 is being under-utilised and services of the probation officers are being wasted on persons who could have been released under section 3 instead of section 4. Consequently, persons convicted of more serious offences and coming from more difficult family backgrounds could have benefited from the services of probation by being released under section 4.

Another observation we have made is that by and large, poverty comes in the way of being considered for probation. Nearly half the probationers came from good family backgrounds, many of them residing in apartments in towns. The poor lost out because of the characteristics of poverty - lack of fixed place of residence, staying in areas not easily approachable/traceable, lack of a steady income source and inability to find suitable sureties.

Another problem with the proper implementation of the Act is the lack of coordination and understanding between the probation officers and the judiciary. The frequency of the probation officers' visits to the courts and meetings with the magistrates depends on the attitudes of the magistrates towards probation and their faith on the probation system, as a means of treatment and rehabilitation. The distance of the court from the DPO's office is another pertinent factor.

The Act says that the court shall/may call for the P.O.'s report (where the magistrate deems it fit or where it is mandatory for him to call for the report). But in practice, most of them cases are 'picked up' by the probation officers from the court, rather than being referred to them by the magistrates. The P.O.s often have to 'request' the magistrates to refer cases to them. The magistrates then usually ask them to go through the cases on board and select 'fit cases' themselves for referral.

As a result of this practice, the P.O.s choose cases for social inquiry reports based on a criteria, which has the greatest chances of success and least risks in recommending probation. They usually chooses cases where the offender is below 21 years of age, arrested for a minor offence, has a fixed place of residence. Because of lack of vehicle facility, the P.O.s tend to choose cases whose families do not stay in interior and inaccessible areas.
If the probation system has to be improved and the P.O. Act is to be implemented in its letter and spirit, then many fundamental changes are required. Some suggestions:

- The Probation Wing has to be separated from the existing Women and Child Development Department. A Department of Corrections should be created to look after probation, prison welfare, aftercare and rehabilitation of released prisoners and women rescued from prostitution. This department could look into the implementation of the P.O. Act, J.J. Act, I.T.P. Act, Beggars' Act and schemes for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons coming under the purview of these acts.
- The staff strength of the D.P.O.'s office has to increased.
- The travelling allowances and facilities (such as a vehicle attached to the D.P.O.'s office) have to be improved.
- Facilities for the rehabilitation of released prisoners and probationers have to be created – aftercare homes, hostels, vocational training, loans for self-employment, counselling, job placement and liaison with the police and the judiciary.

- Regular meetings between the probation department and the judiciary to monitor the implementation of the P.O.Act should be conducted.
- NGOs working in this field should be associated with the work of probation, by way providing supportive and complementary services.
- Awareness has to created amongst prisoners, prison officers, police, judiciary and the general public about the benefits and effectiveness of the probation system.

C. Work in Thane and Kalyan Prisons:

One of the main objectives of starting work in Thane and Kalyan Prisons was to identify cases that could be referred to the judiciary for probation. Initially, the entire focus was on identifying such cases in the Male Adolescent Barracks. This was done through regular visits to the prisons, interviews with prisoners, meetings with prison staff, meetings with magistrates and court staff and lawyers.

With time, it became clear to us that in order to address the issue of probation, other systems in the criminal justice machinery would have to be tackled first. First and foremost, was the issue of non-provision of police escort to prisoners on their dates of appearances. As a result of this, the under trial prisoners were not being produced in court for their dates, thus delaying their trials. Under trial prisoners consist of those persons who have either been denied bail (owing to the seriousness of their offence) or are unable to avail of the bail granted to them (due to their inability to furnish suitable sureties). A majority of the under trial prisoners belong to the second category, who have no social supports outside.

The role of the judiciary is very important here. Those who remain in prisons as under trials expect that justice shall prevail. This does not necessarily mean that they expect to be acquitted in their cases, but at least expect to be produced on their dates in court and their trials to get over speedily (There are some who do not want a speedy trial for fear of being convicted and sentenced). Due to lack of escort facility, their trials get delayed. Thus, justice delayed is justice denied and prisoners gradually lose faith in the judicial process. They try to find alternatives to overcome the system by learning to manipulate it.

One method of manipulating the system is to plead guilty in a case after the lapse of a certain period of imprisonment. This is done by those prisoners

accused of not so major offences. They take a calculated risk, often on the advice of habitual offenders in prison. The calculation is based on the past record of the magistrate concerned, in terms of the period of sentence that he usually convicts a prisoner for a particular offence, if he/she pleads guilty (instead of waiting for the trial to get over).

Sometimes, the magistrate himself offers a bargain – 'If you plead guilty, I will set you free based on the period already spent in the prison as an under trial' or 'I will treat your case sympathetically' or 'I will consider your case for probation' etc. A lot many under trials succumb to this temptation of pleading guilty in order to end the uncertainty and take a chance with their fate. Thus the prisoner literally pays a price for his freedom by denying to himself the right to a free and fair trial.

Coming back to the issue of probation, the Act specifies that a person can be given benefit of probation only after his guilt has been proved i.e. at the conviction stage. A person's guilt can be proved in only two ways - either his guilt is proved at the end of the trial or he pleads guilty at any stage after the charges are framed against him.

Due to the problem of escorts, trials get delayed and as a result, many who could have been considered for probation, do not get its benefit. This problem is particularly grave in Vashi, Panvel, Uran, Khalapur, Raigad, Ulhasnagar, and Bhiwandi courts. Therefore, even if cases fit for probation, were identified by us from prison, due to the problem of escorts and subsequent delays in the trials, they could not be taken up with the judiciary for probation.

As per the Probation of Offenders Act, cases where the punishment is life imprisonment or death, cannot be considered for release on probation. However in practice, we find that in any serious offence, triable in a sessions court, is not considered by the judiciary for release on probation. The mind set of the judiciary is that probation is only meant for petty and minor offences. The Act is seen as a way to show lenience towards minor and first time offenders rather than as a scientific method and an alternative to imprisonment in a large category of minor and serious offences.

In our visits to the Adolescent Barrack, we interviewed those prisoners whose cases had reached the trial stage. In each case, we made a detailed inquiry to know the type of offence and its nature, circumstances under

which the offence was committed, family background, employment history, etc. It came to our notice that many of them did not have a fixed place of residence in the local area, were migrants to the city and did not have anyone to stand surety for them. These are important considerations for grant of probation to any accused and therefore, such cases could not be considered for referral to the magistrates.

In the context of the above discussion, there were few cases in the Male Adolescent Sections of Thane and Kalyan Prisons which could be referred for probation - where the offence is not very serious, the trial has reached the judgement stage and the accused is being regularly produced in court. Apart from the above, the accused has a fixed place of residence or a steady source of employment or has a surety fulfilling either of the above two conditions.

Therefore, with the permission of the prison authorities, we began identifying cases from other barracks too. There is one more reason why we decided to look for cases from the other barracks. We found that there were many accused persons who were below 21 years at the time of arrest and were therefore kept in the Adolescent Barrack. By the time their trials started, they had to be moved to other barracks as they had crossed the age limit of the Adolescent Barrack.

We also discussed the issue of identifying cases fit for probation from the prison with the D.P.O. and P.O.s. After much discussion, The D.P.O. agreed to visit the prison with our worker to identify cases for referral to the magistrates. However, not many cases could be identified through this practice as very of the prisoners could fit the criteria of having fixed place of residence, as mentioned in the P.O. Act.

The probation officers also could not give sufficient time to practice because they are often loaded with other work of the Department of Women and Child Development. Probation work is not a priority area for this department, and a result, the P.O.s are not encouraged to produce better results in this area. This will continue to remain a problem unless a separate department is created to look into probation work.

To deal with the problem of escorts, we started meetings with the judiciary. The Additional Sessions Judge at Kalyan gave us an assurance that for a start, he would pass necessary orders to the police to arrange for immediate escort for those prisoners who had already pleaded guilty in their cases. We

also interacted with most of the magistrates of the lower courts in Thane district.

A suggestion came up during these meetings – that the social inquiry reports of under trials could be called for in advance and kept sealed till the time the accused pleads guilty or his trial leads to a conviction. In this situation, our worker agreed to prepare lists of accused persons in prison who had pleaded guilty in their cases. This was done with the help of the prison staff.

The District and Sessions Judge, Thane, has started a practice whereby he asked the D.P.O. to visit Thane Prison regularly and prepare social inquiry reports of those prisoners who wanted to plead guilty to their offence. The D.P.O. visits the prison every Tuesday and receives applications from prisoners pleading guilty to their offence coming under the jurisdiction of the Thane District and Sessions Court. On receiving their applications, he prepares the social inquiry reports of cases, which in his opinion, are fit for probation.

Most of the judicial officers in Thane district agreed to refer cases identified by Prayas for probation by calling for the report of the Probation Officer. In practice, it has not been easy to identify cases of under trial prisoners fit for probation due to factors mentioned in the earlier discussion. In some cases where referral was made to a magistrate, he gave them a set-off sentence instead of releasing them on probation due to technical problems like lack of a fixed place of residence, unavailability of the P.O's report etc.

As mentioned earlier, a large number of under trial prisoners, who were booked for petty offences, were lying in prison because of non-production in courts. This was brought to the notice of the judiciary and for Kalyan prison, it was agreed that if a list of such cases was prepared and submitted to the court, the judge would ask the police station concerned to produce the accused on a particular day. A large number of prisoners were provided special escort thus and were released on the same day that they were produced in court. This practice has been stopped after a court for petty offences has been set up in the two prisons.

When the circular to start prison courts was issued, we made considerable efforts to get it started. A meeting with the Chief Judicial Magistrate led to a visit by a magistrate to the prison. Soon the courts in Thane and Kalyan prisons started functioning.

The prison population consists of under trials from Mumbai, Thane and Raigad districts. However, prisoners pertaining to Raigad court have not benefited from the prison courts as the magistrate from Raigad district cannot visit prisons located in Thane district. On the other hand, magistrates who are visiting the prison, cannot take up cases belonging to Raigad district. This issue has been taken up and discussed with the District and Sessions Judge of Thane and Raigad by us. As a result, both the judges have asked the permission of the High Court to start a prison court for Raigad cases.

In continuation of this process, the District and Sessions Judge, Raigad requested Prayas to give detailed information about under trial prisoners of Raigad district in Thane and Kalyan prisons. Information about 150 such prisoners from both prisons, was submitted to the judge. In each case, the request of the prisoner concerned and the suggestion of Prayas, was submitted – in terms of calling for the P.O's report, speedy trial, request for personal bond, release on bail, reduction of bail, legal aid etc. In many cases, action was taken based on this information.

The District and Sessions Judge, Raigad, has issued a circular to all judicial magistrates to extend co operation to Prayas with regard to any problems of under trial prisoners. We have been receiving good co-operation from magistrates since then.

Another area of work has been to try for an out of court settlement in compoundable matters. We have tried to reach a settlement in 3 such cases. This work involves meetings with the accused, the complainant and their families, followed by negotiations and bargaining. The chances of success are greater in cases where it is a neighbourhood or community dispute.

In the process of all this work, we have had to build a network of lawyers in courts who could give legal guidance and aid to our clients and their families. Our legal aid panel in Thane and Raigad districts consists of nearly 20 lawyers who are based in Thane, Kalyan, Palghar sessions courts and in the lower courts of Thane, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Bhiwandi, Palghar, Khalapur etc. Our effort now will be to strengthen and work with the government legal aid panel.

The above mentioned efforts are the beginning of a long and continuous process – of trying to address the issues arising out of the implementation of the P.O. Act. The results have been slow to come by but the bottlenecks have been well identified by us.

Apart from the area of probation, we also started looking at the issue of rehabilitation of released prisoners. In our interactions with the prisoners of the Adolescent Section, the objectives of Prayas were often discussed, that of rehabilitation. Many of the prisoners expressed their desire to get out of their criminal lifestyle. Discussions ranged from their family background and support, employment history, the meaning of rehabilitation, the support that Prayas could offer them and what they could do on their own to change their lifestyle.

The prime objective of most prisoners, as can be expected, is to get out of prison. Many of them continue to remain in prison as they have lost touch with their families or there has been a breakdown in their relationships at home. Also many come from poverty backgrounds and therefore their families are in no position to help them. In this situation, the prisoners expect us to visit their families to convince the members to get them released on bail. They expect us to build a bridge between them and their families.

During a home visit, the family members are first given an orientation to the objectives and work of Prayas. In some cases, the family is in no position to help the prisoner. There are cases where the family is in a position to help, but unwilling due to the past record of the prisoner or a total break down in their relationship. In such situations, the worker has to play the role of a neutral third party, trying to negotiate a place for the prisoner within the family.

The family may set certain conditions for re-acceptance and worker has to communicate the same to the prisoner. The worker also often moots the idea of working together with the family towards the re-integration of the prisoner in the community and family. This idea of partnership is appreciated by the family, as they feel supported in their effort to retrieve their lost member.

During this stage, the worker also provides legal guidance and aid to the prisoner and his family, counselling both parties continuously and making them aware of the issues and problems of the post-release phase. As a result

of this process, many families came forward to release their wards on bail and take responsibility for them.

Apart from paying home visits, our worker also started visiting courts, meeting magistrates, making case presentations before them, requesting them to refer a case for probation, requesting lawyers to take up cases for legal aid and advise, etc. as part of rehabilitation work. Many prisoners received the benefit of probation, were released on personal bond, or released on a set-off sentence.

The home visits were made in Thane and Raigadh districts covering vast areas like Palghar, Nalasopara, Bhoisar, Alibagh, Uran, Panvel, Khalapur, Mahad. They included metro, semi-urban and rural areas. Some of the visits were in the rural interiors where there was no means of transport. These visits helped the worker to arrive at a clearer picture of the person with whom he was working and also at the time of presentation of a case before a magistrate. The purpose of home visits could be summarised as follows:

- To know the social surrounding of the person who were released on probation.
- To identify the family's resources to help a person re-integrated in society.
- To bridge the gap between the family and the prisoner.
- To identify supports from other well wishers other than the family.
- To give legal guidance to the family
- To find out whether a prisoner could be released on personal bond, at the request of the court.
- To draw a future plan after release from prison.
- To find out what the prisoner was doing after his release and to guide and counsel him.
- To help the family to deal with the problems arising after the release of the prisoner.
- To help the released prisoner and his family take responsibility for each other.

D. Work in Byculla District Prison

We have recently started work in Byculla Prison, with the permission of the Prison Department, Maharashtra. The decision to start work in Byculla was motivated by a few factors. Firstly, Byculla Prison houses under trials

arrested for petty offences and those convicted in fine-sentence cases. These include offences such as ticketless travelling, hawking in prohibited areas (such as railway premises), and minor cases which are summarily disposed off by the courts.

This is a particularly vulnerable group which remains in prison simply because they cannot pay the fine amount levied on them. By working with them, we would gain an understanding about the problems faced by a group about which we were not familiar. Being a member of the IDC, we felt that we would then be able to put up their problems before the Committee.

Secondly, the inmates of the male Adolescent Section of Mumbai Central Prison arrested under minor and petty offences have been shifted to this prison, due to overcrowding of the Section. Intervention with this group would have been left out if we had not started work in Byculla Prison. We placed one social worker for this purpose from September, 2000, and it is already clear to us that there is enough scope for work in Byculla.

The stipulated population of this prison is around 300, and the current population size is around 550. It was originally built to house civil prisoners i.e. those arrested and/or sentenced by a civil court. Most prisoners in this prison used to be those who had been arrested under fine-sentence cases. However, due to an increase in crime and overcrowding of prisons, this prison now also houses under trial prisoners arrested in petty and less serious cases. Another interesting feature of this prison is that it houses persons from Maharashtra who have been arrested and sentenced for non-payment of maintenance under the Cr.P.C. (awarded by the court to their spouse or other dependants).

The male youth population in this prison is around 70 to 80. Some of these prisoners were earlier housed in Mumbai Central Prison and they knew about the work of Prayas. This made it easier for our worker to start work in Byculla.
We also received full cooperation of the D.I.G. Prisons, Shri Kinninge and the Acting Superintendent, Shri B.S. Swami in this connection.

Around 60% of the male youth population are from outside Mumbai and Maharashtra. They do not have any family support in the city. As a result, there is no one to bail them out. Due to the inordinate delay in the trial process, many of them plead guilty, after spending a few months in prison,

even though they may be innocent in the case. They are coached into doing this by the habituals they meet in prison and in court, who advise them that this is the quickest way to go out ("Plead guilty after a few months, and the magistrate will set you free, with a sentence already spent in prison as an under trial").

Most of these under trials live on the footpaths and have no choice but to go back to living on the streets, now with a police record. The lack of any positive supports and the criminalising influence of imprisonment, makes them vulnerable to the overtures of habitual offenders. It also makes them vulnerable to further arrests by the police due to their past record.

Most prisoners here are those arrested by the railway police. These are primarily of four types:

a. Ticketless travelling
b. Hawking on railway premises
c. Stealing of railway property
d. Pick pocketing/chain snatching in suburban trains or in railway premises

The first category consists of those who were caught travelling ticketless in the railways. They were sentenced to a few days of imprisonment in lieu of the non-payment of fines imposed on them by the courts. Many such persons remain in prison as they have been unable to inform their family or friends about the fine amount. In such cases, our worker pays home visits to inform the family about the fine amount and the payment procedure. Our view on this is that such persons should be out of prison as early as possible to avoid any criminalising influences.

The second category consists of those who have been caught doing small businesses like selling wares, food items, etc. on the railway trains/premises without a licence or permission. They are sent to prison, again for non-payment of the fine imposed on them by the court. In such cases, apart from informing their families, our worker has discussions with them about the type and nature of their business.

Sometimes, they request for financial assistance to re-start their businesses. The worker gives them information about government loan schemes for self-employment and also discusses with them, the possibility of doing the same business outside railway premises. We have also decided that if the amount

of assistance requested is small and falls within our aftercare programme budget, we will consider the same.

In case of the third and fourth category of persons in the prison, the worker takes into consideration factors such as their psycho-social background, type of offence, first offender or habitual, individual or gang-related crime, motivation to change their lifestyle, existing skills and interests and the relationship with the worker. He pays home visits, visits to the employer's place, meeting the police (investigation) officer concerned, and has discussions with the inmate about his future plans. The effort here is to build a positive relationship with the person, motivate him and help him think of alternatives to a criminal lifestyle.

In the case of those arrested for non-payment of maintenance amount, the worker's role is mostly limited to listening to 'their side of the story'. We have found that some of these persons get emotionally or mentally disturbed, due to the experience of imprisonment. In one such case who was from Baramati district in Maharashtra, the man was 22 years old and was steadily losing his physical and mental health status. On realising this, our worker sent a telegram to his family but there was no response. After two months, his family came, paid the amount imposed by the court and got him released.

Inmates of the Male Youth Barrack were not involved in any positive activities. A T.V. in the barrack is their only source of entertainment. We found that most of their time went in chatting with each other, making friends and contacts, idling away their time and sleeping. We felt the need to organise some educational/recreational activities, informative lectures, games and training programmes.

We organised a sports and recreation meet for the Youth Barrack on 26th January in which 30 inmates participated. The games organised were – frog race, lemon and spoon race, relay race, carrom and painting competitions. Even though the activities organised were simple, the youth took part in them with great enthusiasm. The Superintendent gave away to the winners, a T-shirt and a pair of shorts as prizes, and to all participants, a washing and a bathing soap each as a token of participation. The prizes and token gifts had been decided upon based on their suggestions.

Future Plans:

We now plan to organise vocational guidance and training programmes in prison on a regular basis. Recreational activities go a long way in countering the negative environment in prison and promoting pro-social values. We are also planning to organise lecture-cum-discussions on small business enterprises, entreprenuerial skill development, loan schemes and experience sharing by small entreprenuers. The objective here is to focus on economic alternatives to crime as a way of life and motivating the prisoners to think of pro-social options.

Some Issues:

1. There is a system mentioned in the prison manual, that on completion of sentence, the prison authorities can issue a Railway/S.T. bus ticket (known as warrant) to the released prisoner to the place of jurisdiction of his court or his native place, at his/her request. Those sentenced to imprisonment for their inability to pay the fine imposed on them in cases of ticketless travelling, however, cannot be given this facility, as per the rules. This needs to be reviewed
2. There is need for a small (say two-bed) medical section in the prison with a full time doctor and a nurse/compounder. At present, there is a full time doctor who visits the prisoners twice in a day. This change is being suggested in view of the increasing population in the prison.

III. FAMILY SUPPORT UNIT

A study on the situation of Children of Prisoners, conducted by Prayas is nearing completion. We are presently engaged in finalising this report and will be publishing it in a book form. We are also planning to use this publication to create awareness on the issue of children of prisoners, through its wide circulation in government and the NGO sector. Out objective is the creation of services for this vulnerable group in the near future.

Apart from this, work with families of prisoners, specially children of women prisoners has been going on, through two of our workers appointed for this purpose. The work includes talking to the mothers inside, identifying their concerns with regard to their children left outside, paying home visits to find out the ground situation and extending help to the families/children as per the need. Services include giving immediate financial assistance to the family for basic needs, support for educational expenses, admission to school or hospital, legal guidance with regard to the mother's case, arranging for 'mulakat' with children inside prison, temporary institutionalisation of the children, arranging for foster care, etc.

A few cases:

1) We have been working with a 15 year old girl whose mother is in the prison under the M.P.D.A. Act. Since the girl is left outside alone, a considerable amount of time has been spent on paying home visits and taking care of her emotional and other needs. In the beginning we were planning to admit her in a boarding school. However, she was already going to school and we did not want to force her to go to boarding school. In the month of May, 2000, she was alone at home with hardly any interaction with the outside world (because of summer vacations).

We felt that this was having an adverse impact on her psyche. We tried to prepare her mentally to stay in the boarding school. We discussed with her the idea of finding an institution, which would be near to her house, so that she could look after the house. However she was not open to going to a boarding school. In the month of June we provided all necessary educational assistance to her to re-join school. By October, she was agreeable to go to a

boarding school. She was ready for this provided her mother consented to this arrangement.

We met her mother at Yeravada Prison, Pune and tried to explain to her the problems her daughter would face if she stayed alone at home and those that could arise from a girl staying alone in an area. After this, the mother was ready to admit her child to boarding school. But meanwhile, due to some reason, the girl change her mind When we visited her, she started crying and was against going to a boarding school. We told her that she could contact us for any problem. We kept in regular touch with her. After some months, the mother was released from prison. Later, at the mother's request, the girl was admitted to a boarding school in Bharuch.

2) A woman came to us in our office with a referral letter from the Special Cell for Women and Children (TISS). She was a widow with a 14 year old son and complained of her son's deviant behaviour. According to her, the boy had dropped out of school, was into gambling and making the wrong kind of friends. She was planning to admit her son into an institution (for uncontrollable behaviour). She was staying in a slum community with her sister's family and was out the whole day working as a domestic help. The Special Cell worker felt that institutionalisation would be seen by the boy as rejection by his mother, and therefore, referred the case to us.

Our initial effort was to build a rapport with the boy. For this, we paid a few home visits. We also discussed his behaviour with the mother and tried to get to the root of the matter. After a while, we realised that the boy was getting extra attention from his mother and she had no control over him. He left his school, and was roaming all the time in the locality he resided in. His friends comprised of all older boys and men in the community. He was struggling with the issue of manhood. He wanted to earn and 'show' his mother that he was man enough to be listened to.

After observing him for some time, we felt a need to refer him to a child guidance clinic. Before this it was decided that he could attend the Prayas Workshop for Training, during which time we could also observe him. For around two and a half months, he came regularly to our workshop. While observing him we came to know that he would tell different stories to every worker. He was addicted to gutkha and was rude with the other clients in the workshop. He was more interested in the stipend than in the training he was receiving.

After some time, he expressed a desire to learn auto repairs. We decided to send him for a garage mechanic course. He joined and then left the course saying that his mother was not allowing him for the same. Then we referred him to Shree Manav Seva Sangh, for specialized counselling. According to the social worker of Shree Manav Seva Sangh, he is a very smart boy, but due to his disturbed childhood (his father was an alcoholic and was violent with his mother), is unable to concentrate in his studies. She feels that his case is improving.

3) In another case, a woman was arrested for murder. Her three-year old son and one-year old daughter were with her maternal family, in a rural suburb of Thane district. It was too far from the prison and the mother's contact with her children had become minimum. The worker helped by arranging for a mulakat with her children.

4) A woman was released from the prison a year back. After release, she was working as a domestic worker but had left the job. As a result, we have no information about her whereabouts. Her husband, who has also been released from prison, is being helped by our worker to trace his wife.

5) The worker also visited a children's institution regularly, to meet the four-year old daughter of one of our clients, a released woman prisoner, who is mentally disturbed and no one from her family was ready to take the responsibility of the girl. She was admitted to the institution by the orders of the Juvenile Welfare Board, at our intervention. The girl is bright in her studies and the institutional staff are happy with her progress.

Creche for Children in Prison (accompanying their mothers inside) :

At any given point of time, the prison houses around 3-7 children of women prisoners. There have been instances when there have been around 15 children inside prison. Children upto 5 years of age are housed inside prison. Our worker interacts with such children. Recreational activities, such as games, song sessions are organised for them. Discussions are held with women on issues significant to child care, such as:

a) Importance of hygiene
b) Communication between mother and child (e.g. language used while communicating with children)
c) Need to maintain cordial relations with other mothers

IV. LEGAL AID AND COURT UNIT

This year, our legal aid worker proceeded on losng leave (on medical grounds). As a result, our worker in Esplanade Court and the prison workers had to double up as legal aid workers. The workers in prison had to handle to the additional load of legal guidance and counselling, writing applications (if urgently required), follow-up with lawyers and meeting magistrates in courts. The court worker was given the additional responsibility of liaising with our lawyers in lower courts in South Mumbai as well as the Sessions Court. Some of the follow-up work in courts was divided amongst the other staff of Prayas based on their areas of residence.

All this required greater coordination among the prison workers, court worker and other staff. Work did suffer as a result, but was somehow managed and problems were continuously sorted out through unit and staff meetings. We have now appointed a new legal aid worker (our previous worker finally resigned, as he has shifted his base from Mumbai to his native place in Ratnagiri).

Some of the load in the legal aid unit was lessened due to our continuing collaboration with the Government Law College (GLC). This year, the project kicked off with an inaugural address by the Hon'ble Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Shri T.V. Nalawade to the students in the GLC Campus. Shri Nalawade exhorted the students to use this golden opportunity to serve the needy prisoners and provide them with necessary relief. He congratulated the GLC authorities, the Prison Department and Prayas for starting this project.

Students of GLC have been visiting the Women's and Male Adolescent Barracks of Mumbai Central Prison as part of their graded fieldwork. They visited the two sections in batches of ten, twice a week, except during their vacations. Their job was to listen to prisoners' problems and write applications on their behalf to the magistrate concerned for appropriate action. They wrote applications for bail, reduction of bail, release on personal bond, pleading guilty, speedy trial, probation, etc.

Their work in the second half of the year got interrupted due to a number of holidays, semester examinations and absence of a regular faculty member from GLC to guide them in the project. We have had several meetings with

the Principal and faculty of the college in this regard. Hopefully, in the coming year, these problems will get sorted out.

Our aim to reach legal aid to unrepresented under trial prisoners continued through our efforts to network with the government legal aid panel. We had several meetings with the Brihan Mumbai Legal Services Authority (BMLSA) in this regard. A legal aid camp was organised in the Women's Section as a result of our efforts. In this camp, lawyers from the legal aid panel gave legal guidance to prisoners and informed them about the eligibility criteria for availing free legal aid. Requests made by prisoners for legal aid during this camp were forwarded to the legal aid authorities for action. The Prison Superintendent requested the panel members to organise similar camps regularly in prison.

We have also been following up cases with lawyers from the legal aid authority. We found that lawyers take greater interest in a case if there is someone to follow up with them on a case assigned to them. We have been appointed as a non-official member of Brihan Mumbai Legal Services Authority (chaired by the Principal Judge of the Mumbai City Civil and Sessions Court). Our court worker represents Prayas in the Committee of the said Authority.

The Hon'ble Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Shri T.V. Nalawade, who is the Member Secretary of the BMLSA, had mooted a proposal to conduct para-legal training programmes for social workers working in the community and in the field of legal aid. This proposal has been accepted by the BMLSA. A sub-committee consisting of the new Hon'ble C.M.M., Shri P.M. Bansod, a faculty of the Law Department of Mumbai University and Prayas has been constituted to work out the details of this proposal.

Our court worker has been regularly following up with the Department of Law and Judiciary to hold meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committee, set up under the directions of the Mumbai High Court (to look into the problems of under trial prisoners and the rehabilitation of released prisoners). As a result of these efforts, a meeting if the IDC was held on the 10th of July,2000 at Mantralaya under the chairmanship of the I.G. Prisons, Shri T. Singarvel. The issue of overcrowding of women's sections of Mumbai and Kalyan Prisons was discussed in this meeting. A decision was taken to do a study on the same to find out the reasons for overcrowding and

suggest ways to deal with the problem. Prayas was given the task of doing the study and submitting a report for the next meeting.

We undertook the study in September in the Women's Sections of Mumbai Central and Kalyan District Prisons. We collected data from 141 under trial prisoners with the help of our staff and student social workers from TISS based in prison. The data was analysed and interpreted by a group set up for this purpose in Prayas, consisiting of all ex and present prison female workers and student social workers doing fieldwork in prison. A report on the same has been submitted recently by us to the IDC. We are following up with them to call the next meeting of the IDC.

Another issue that was taken up in the IDC meeting held on 10/7/2000, was the setting up of the Mumbai IDC under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble C.M.M. The said Committee got duly constituted as a result of this meeting. The Mumbai IDC Committee consists of the Hon'ble C.M.M. (Chairperson), District Probation Officer, Director of Women and Child Welfare Officer, D.I.G. (Law and Order), Superintendents of Mumbai Central and Byculla District Prisons, Director of Education and Health and Prayas.

Three meetings have been held so far, to discuss issues related to the rehabilitation of prisoners. Members have submitted their ideas about the steps that need to be taken in this regard. Cases have been presented by Prayas, requesting for the cooperation of the Probation Department and the Police in the rehabilitation of these cases. Unfortunately, snce the transfer of the Hon'ble C.M.M. Shri T.V. Nalawade to Parbhani, no meetings have been called. We are following up this matter with his incumbent Hon'ble Shri P.M. Bansod.

Arart from all this, our court worker has also been doing his regular work in Esplanade Court. He sits in the office of the BMLSA, which is situated next to the canteen at the ground floor of the Esplanade Court Campus. He, along with the staff of the BMLSA, Smt. Shraddha Wagal gives legal guidance to persons approaching the court for various reasons.

These include families of accused persons, complainants, litigants, those approaching the courts to get affidavits or their domicile certificates made. Many of them are ignorant about legal procedures and could get duped by unsrcupulous elements and touts roaming the campus. Our work is to give

these persons proper information and guidance to avoid harassment and exploitation.

Our worker has also worked on compoundable cases by trying to arrive at an out of court settlement between the complainant and offending parties. He has been referred such cases by the magistrates in Esplanade Court. This work involves counselling, joint meetings and negotiations between the two parties. Success depends on whether a settlement can be arrived which provides a sense of justice to the two parties concerned. Some persons have approached us for legal guidance and settlement of their case after reading our board put up outside the Remand Court in Esplanade.

V. POLICE STATION UNIT

Social work intervention at police stations was, initially, an extension of our work in prison. Our objective was to focus on first time offenders, suspects and minor cases in the lock-up. We had initially placed students in Matunga Police Station, followed by Deonar and Shivaji Nagar Police Stations.

During the Mumbai riots in 1992, students and social workers had played a vital role in providing relief to the citizens approaching the police station in Deonar. They were involved in giving citizens information about the dead and injured, helping them fill the compensation forms, directing them to hospitals and morgues and acting as a link between the citizenry and the police. Their role was appreciated by the public and the police alike,that led to the placement of full-time social workers by Prayas.

Gradually, we moved base to Chembur Police Station, where we are based since the last six years. We have expanded our base to four police stations – Chembur, Mahim, Nagpada and C.S.T. Railway. Our work in Nagpada Police Station will be reported under the Section 'Rescued Women and Girls (from prostitution) Unit'.

Each placement has been planned keeping a specific group or intervention in mind. The objective is to demonstrate the need and role of social workers at police station to the police, government and the community. Broadly, the focus is on vulnerable groups – women, children, victims of violent crimes, cases of substance abuse and mental disturbance. The worker's role includes counselling, service provision and referral to community based and government services.

A. Work at Chembur Police Station

Our worker at this police station handles cases mainly of women, children, adolescent youth and senior citizens – in fact, anyone who is in need of psycho-social or rehabilitative intervention.

Women coming to the police station are usually victims of violence, abuse, rape or marital conflict or harassment. Cases of women working in beer bars and brought to the police station have also become a focus of our intervention. Details of this area of work will be reported later. With regard

to children, cases include runaways, lost/missing children, child abuse, child labour, neglected and delinquent children. Cases of youth include first time offenders, youth involved in love affairs (eloping and living together against parents' wishes), and those involved in drug or alcohol addiction. In the case of senior citizens, these are usually cases of harassment by their children/family members and those in need of shelter. Cases of mentally disturbed persons being brought to the police station by family members of members of the public also require the social worker's intervention.

At the Police Station, the worker intervenes in many cases of short-term nature and those that require long term follow-up. The worker also intervened in cases of young offenders in the lock-up.

Case Illustration:

A 14-year old boy, residing in Govandi, had been studying in the eighth standard in school. He had also been attending coaching classes. His family's economic condition was very poor. He used to work as a sweeper in the coaching class to pay for his fees and supplement his household expenses. One day, while cleaning the class, he was caught by the teacher taking Rs. 50/- from the cash box. The teacher decided not to hand over the case to the police, but at the same time, do something to avoid any further occurrence of such an incident. Therefore, he contacted our social worker at Chembur Police Station.

When the worker paid a home visit, he was shocked. The boy had two younger sisters and a mother who was ill. There was nobody to look after them. His father had passed away, as a result of alcoholism. The family had no financial supports from anybody and had not had food since the past two days. As a result, the boy stole the money from the cash box.

Social Worker's Intervention- The worker gave financial assistance to the family, and admitted the boy's mother to Somaiya Hospital for medical treatment. The boy was helped to obtain admission for a wireman's course at Abhinav Technical Institute, at Chembur. Prayas is presently giving him a daily stipend of Rs. 50/-. The worker regularly pays visits to his family.

Work with Women Working in Beer Bars:

Our social worker has been collecting data on women working in beer bars in and around Chembur area. It is necessary to know more about the situation of beer bar girls to find out how Prayas can work towards their rehabilitation. The worker has started collecting data on the issue. So far, 20 girls from Chembur and New Bombay have been interviewed. The following observations have come to light:

a) Most of these women are married.
b) In many cases, the husband of the woman is alcohol/drug addict.
c) They have two or three children and are very concerned and worried about the future of their children.
d) They do not have any other source of income.
e) They have been pulled into this profession by the force of circumstances and suggestions made by another woman who is known to them and is in the same profession.
f) Many of them have left their in-law's/husband's houses and are staying independently in a slum area where housing is cheap.
g) Most of them said that they would leave the profession after four /five years, would purchase their own house and ensure that their children complete their education.
h) Their daily income is not fixed. One can earn anything from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 300/- a day. They have to spend around seventy percent of their daily income on clothes and make up, as one is required to go to the bar well dressed.
i) They travel in auto-rickshaws and taxis to and from work and do not use public transport. They fear that a customer may recognize them and approach them in their area. This would result in people in their area of residence learning about their nature of work.
j) They do not have the habit of savings as they feel that they can earn money easily. They do not respect their work ('fukat ka paisa') and it feel that the money earned will not remain with them.
k) In lean periods, or on bad days, they find it difficult to survive. Yet they have to spend on clothes and make-up to 'look good'. As a result, they take debts from money lenders or from their owners, who lend them at high interest rates. Slowly, they get bonded to the profession with no escape route.

Case Illustration:

While interviewing a bar-girl, her problems came to light. The woman, aged 30 years, was married when she was 17 years old. Her husband was working for the B.M.C., but was not attending work regularly. He was an alcoholic and suffering from T.B. Therefore, the economic condition of the family was poor. She had three children and it was very difficult for her to fulfill their basic needs like food, clothing, education, etc. As a result, when a friend told her about the possibility of earning more money (despite not having educational qualifications) if she was willing to work in a beer bar, she decided to venture into this field.

Social Worker's Intervention - After having discussions with her, the social worker was given to understand that the woman would rather not work in this area. On being asked whether she would consider leaving it if her husband attended work regularly and take care of the family expenses, she was keen to receive help to improve her family situation. Therefore, the worker, along with the woman, her husband and children, met the mukadam – the supervisor in B.M.C. The mukadam suggested that our worker helps to admit the husband in a hospital and submits the hospital papers to the office. The worker took the initiative and admitted the man to Shatabdi Hospital and also provided the family with temporary financial assistance.

The woman has now left the beer bar job. PRAYAS has helped her start a small business (selling *usal*), being based at home. She has therefore been able to take care of her financial needs.

B. Work at C.S.T. Railway Police Station

Introduction:

While working with cases of runaway girls and women who had left their homes in Chembur Police Station, we had realised that in the absence of positive supports, these girls and women were vulnerable to suggestions of anti-social persons. This was particularly true of cases where the families refused to take back the girl/woman due to social pressures and loss of status for the families in their area of residence. We wondered what happened to such girls and women who were without shelter.

In order to explore possibilities of intervention with this group, we decided to do a study on the issue. It was decided after some discussion, that the most likely place to find such cases would be at railway stations where out station trains arrive in Mumbai city. We received the permission of the railway and police authorities to conduct a study. Data was collected from C.S.T. to Mulund and Churchgate to Virar with the help of two women police constables given to us for this purpose by the police department. The study clearly revealed to us the need to work at railway police stations – to prevent such women and girls fall into the trap of prostitution, crime, beggary, mental disturbance or destitution.

After much discussions with police and railway officials, NGOs working for street children and youth and within Prayas, it was decided to start work in C.S.T. Railway Police Station. The C.S.T. Railway Station is an area, which draws persons for various reasons, such as employment, shelter, livelihood etc. Being a terminus, people coming to Mumbai from all over India may tend to stay in or around C.S.T. Those without supports may be pulled into exploitative activities, or may stand the chance of being exploited themselves. The police pick up such persons, and our attempt is to work with this group and to avoid further exploitation and/or criminalisation

The Commissioner of Railway Police granted us permission to start work at C.S.T. Railway Police Station. Initially, one female and male worker were placed at the station. Due to shortage of staff, our female worker has now been withdrawn from there and helps out only when the need arises. We have been granted permission to intervene in cases of women and children coming to the police station – whether as victims, complainants or offenders. We also patrol the station to identify cases of women and children in distress or in need.

A circular has been issued to all railway police stations in the jurisdiction of Mumbai Railway Police Commissionerate to refer such cases to us, for psycho-social and rehabilitative intervention. The Senior Inspector of C.S.T. Railway Police Station has provided us a table and phone facility. Being a new setting, we have had to spend a lot of time explaining to the police our objective behind placement of a social worker in the police station. Initially, there were hardly any referrals from other police stations.

At the police station, social work intervention is sought when the police detect a need to work on the socio-economic or psycho-social angle. For

example, when a girl refuses to give information about herself to the police, the social worker is asked to speak to her. In some cases the worker identifies cases in need of our services, and approaches the client himself.

We have been sitting in the duty room and intervening in cases which could be categorised as follows:

Runaway Cases :

As C.S.T. is the terminus of Central Railway in Mumbai, most of the runaway children from interior Maharashtra, U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and the southern states finally land up here. We have handled such cases from suburban Mumbai, Nashik, Nagpur, Solapur, Chandrapur, Hyderabad, Katni (M.P.) and Muzzafarpur (Bihar). The reasons were lack of parental control or excessive control, poverty, attraction of Mumbai and disturbed family background.

One young girl from higher middle class family ran away from home only to learn dance in Bombay and luckily she met a good person who brought her to the police station. She was ultimately sent to the Observation Home for repatriation to her family. In cases of minor girls and boys who are below 18 and 16 years respectively, the police processes them under Juvenile Justice Act and sends them to Observation Home. What could be our role in such cases?

As we aware, the police do not have the time or skills to get detailed information from these children and counsel them. They simply refer such cases to the Juvenile Welfare Board for further action, as per the law. As social workers, we speak to such children (after being brought to the police station), and using our counselling skills, get information about their psycho-socio-economic background and the reasons for their leaving home. After counseling, if the child is local and willing to go back to his/her family, we insist that police call or contact the family.

This helps us to understand the home situation and also to explain to the parents the needs of the child (including reasons for running away). In the absence of proper counselling and looking deeper into the reasons for running away, repatriation often does not help. We came across the case of a seven year old boy who had been repatriated thrice by the Juvenile Welfare Board to his family in Nagpur, and yet he was back in the station.

A fourteen year old boy was picked up by the police. When the social worker initiated a discussion with the boy, he revealed that he was from Bihar. He had run away from home 4 years back. He had spent some time in shelter homes in Mumbai. Not being able to adjust with the environment of such homes, he started working at C.S.T., where he was a cleaner at a coffee stall, and slept near G.P.O. on D.N.Road bus stop.

Meanwhile, he got addicted to inhaling ink-solution. Because of the social worker's intervention, the boy gave his hometown address and the worker wrote a letter to his parents in Bihar. His addiction problem was discussed and he agreed to undergo treatment. Our worker admitted the boy to the hospital. From the hospital the boy disappeared.

After few days the worker was successful in tracing the boy, who was now back on the streets. The worker did a lot of follow up in this case. It was then decided to refer the boy to the Juvenile Welfare board with the help of police. The concerned probation officer was given whatever information we had that was relevant to the case. The probation officer contacted an officer in Bihar who traced the boy's family there. The boy was finally restored to his family. As per last reports, he is mentally and physically happy with his family.

For children of this age, it is difficult to stop addictions and other negative habits. Their tendency to drift into criminal behaviour is also high, thus making it necessary to work with them so as to arrest this progress into anti-social behaviour.

A case of a runaway girl was referred to us by the police . The worker learnt that she was in her late teens, and had run away from Hyderabad as her husband was harassing her for a dowry. Every time her husband pressurised her for securing a dowry, she would return to her stepmother and brother. They in turn, convinced her to return to her husband. Fed up with this situation, she ran away and came to Mumbai.

The worker learnt that she shared a good relationship with her father who was in Dubai. The worker suggested to the Senior Inspector that a letter be immediately sent to her father in Dubai, and that she be referred to the Juvenile Welfare Board.

Later, a visit was paid to Asha Sadan, where the girl was being housed, and whatever information we had in this case was shared with the probation officer.

There is a lot that a social worker can do at the police station at the preventive level, specially with adult youth. A 22 years old girl who hailed from Chandrapur ran away from home and came to Mumbai (C.S.T. station) as she had failed in her H.S.C. examination. She agreed to go back home with escort after our counselling.

Another girl of the same age came to Mumbai from a small town in Maharashtra, as she wanted to become a Femina Miss India. We explained to her about the pros and cons of the beauty business. But on coming to know about resources required, the struggle ahead and the vulnerability to sexual exploitation (of a single woman without support in Mumbai), she decided take temporary shelter in the Government Reception Centre and then go home.

A 20 year youth came to C.S.T. station in an exhausted state. He did not have money to go back to his native in Katni. After speaking to him, we came to know that he had come to Mumbai to meet Laxmikant Pyarelal to show his songs written in ten note-books. He knocked many doors but people turned him away. Gradually his money got over and he was dejected. We explained that wanting to make a career in the film industry required a lot of struggle and financial support.

After some thought, he decided to go back to his native place. We bought him a railway ticket and put him on the train to Katni. The mental state that he was in, we felt he was vulnerable to anyone offering him help. If he had stayed back in Mumbai in such a condition, he would have been forced to live his life on the streets and could have come in contact with anti-social/criminal elements, thus making him vulnerable to crimogenic life.

Mentally Disturbed Cases:

Police station is a place where one can see mentally disturb people coming frequently. These are the people who roams around the respective area and doesn't seem to be connected to their families. In C.S.T. Police Station, one old man frequently comes and asks the police to give endorsement and seal of the police station on some papers. Another lady comes ocassionally at any

time of the day, says something loudly and disappears. When one tries to talk to them, they do not respond.

Since the last one year, one middle aged lady used to come to our police station, with letters addressed to her brother and relatives in Bengali language, hand them over to the policeman and go away. She was seen roaming around C.S.T. Station. We tried speaking to her, and got a little response. As we cannot speak Bengali, we took the help of a Bengali speaking boy, referred to us by the police. We explained to him the need for communication with the Bengali lady. Simultaneously, we also sent a letter to the S.P. of Burdwan District in West Bengal, requesting him to trace the addresses mentioned in her letters to the police. On his request, we also sent her photograph.

To our pleasant surprise, the woman's family was traced. We received letters from her mother and husband, showing willingness to receive her back. However, due to reasons of poverty, they expressed their inability to come to Mumbai and requested that she be sent home with police escort. As per their request, she was sent back to her mother with police escort. Apparently, she had a history of disturbance, and had gone missing from home with her four year old son. Sadly, when we found her in C.S.T., her son was not with her.

One day, a fair looking, young girl in her early twenties, entered the police station accompanied by a lady police constable and some women. She was crying and abusing the other ladies, who were employees of some co-operative society. They were also abusing her. The girl said she was a dentist in St. George Hospital and had picked up a quarrel with the staff as they refused to give her computerised receipt.

On observing her, we came to realise that her conversations were not coherent, and she seemed disturbed. She was furious with the women and wanted to put them behind bars. Being a non-cognisable matter, the police could not do anything. But she kept on pressurizing them. So, the police requested for our intervention. After talking to her for nearly an hour, she calmed down and agreed to file a private complaint in the court. We assured her legal guidance in the matter, if she wanted.

Accused Persons' Cases:

We had permission only to work with female accused persons. As a new setting, not a single case has been referred to us by the other railway police stations. We are only able to work with the cases of CST Police Station. So far we have handled 3 cases out of which one was our old client. We get time only when the accused is brought to the police station. We plan to visit the Female Lock-up in Kurla, where we can talk to the accused in detail.

As we are not supposed to interfere in the investigation process, we talk to the person about her family background, her future plans and explain to her about the option of coming to Prayas, after her release from the lock-up/prison. We also try to understand the person's psycho-social background, motivation to change, etc. We could not work with two of the cases in detail as they went out on bail very next day. The third case has been in our contact since last eight years. She has no record during this period. She was spotted by a women police constable on railway station. As per the practice, she was brought to the police station for questioning.

We immediately contacted the A.C.P. concerned and explained our previous work with the client. He understood our objective and promised that the police will proceed in the matter only if they found some evidence against her. Subsequently, she was arrested and charged with a case of theft. Later, she was released on bail by the court.

Cases of Women in Prostitution:

On C.S.T. Station, in the evenings, one can see some women trying to solicit customers. The railway police usually book them under the Railway Act (section 145-B), which provides a fine of Rs. 1000/-, where as section 110 of the Bombay Police Act provides for a fine of Rs. 100/- only. Most of these women are in this trade due to the force of circumstances. Also, fining them serves no constructive purpose. It only increases their financial burden, further pushing them into the trade. It does not serve as a deterrent, and is seen by the women as an occupational hazard. We have been trying to convince the police not to use Section 145-B of the Railway Act. Instead, we have been requesting the police to refer such cases to us.

So far we have been referred a few such cases by the police. When they get arrested, the police give them option of either talking to social worker or pay

the fine. In our counseling, we try to find out their family situation, reason for coming and remaining in the trade and their mental state. We also talk to them about the effect of their profession on their children. Lastly, we give them the option of coming to Prayas for help, if they are interested in leaving the profession. After our intervention, two such women have not come back again on the station. This is a difficult area of work and success is not going to come easily.

Cases of Beggary:

Some of the children who have been staying on railway station premises beg for a living. There are also old and middle-aged people found begging in the premises. Police believe that this is a social problem and they cannot not solve it. During the visit of any V.I.P., police rounds off the beggars and urchins and detains them for one night. Cases under the Beggar's Act are hardly ever registered. In the case of children, they refer them to the Juvenile Welfare Board, even though they sometimes have a negative opinion about government run children's institutions.

When such cases are brought to the police station in our presence, we talk to them, try to get their background and if they seem interested, give them the option of coming to our Workshop for Training and employment. A middle aged lady was brought to the police station along with her three small children. On questioning, we found that she was from Ahmedabad. Her husband was a drug addict and forced her into begging. On further probing, we found that she used to sell spices in Ahmedabad.

We offered her the option of working in our Workshop, in order to save money to re-start the same business in Mumbai. We also discussed with her about the de-addiction of her husband and institutionalization of her children. She came to our Workshop for some time, but then stopped coming. However, she has never seen begging on station. We couldn't trace her home as the address was vague.

Another young lady came to the police station and asked for food. When we spoke to her, we came to know that her sister-in-law met with an accident and was admitted to St. George Hospital. The whole family had migrated from a rural area and had no support in Mumbai. We organised resources, talked to the doctors for concessional treatment and helped them with travel expenses to go back to their native.

Some problems faced at the police station:

a) Due to limited manpower, police are sometimes not able to render help promptly (e. g. providing escort to accompany a client to her hometown may take time).
b) Lengthy procedures sometimes affect the efficiency of work. It demotivates the police personnel in taking up cases of women and children in distress. They try to dispose off such cases in an informal manner, which becomes difficult to do in our presence. As a result, they sometimes resent our presence in the police station.
c) There could be a difference between our orientation and that of police personnel's. This could be because the police see their primary role as that of maintenance of law and order and prevention of crime. The types of cases that come to the police station and become our focus of attention are not considered important from the police point of view. As a result, sometimes, there could be friction between us on what requires their urgent intervention

Future plans:

1. Meetings with Railway Police Force, to work with cases that require social work intervention. Railway Police (GRP) is supposed to detect crimes and register cases in railway premises. The RPF's main agenda is to protect railway property and the two forces are supposed to work in coordination with one another. We feel that we need to also interact with the RPF to widen our net.
2. Meetings with sweeping staff, ticket collectors, hawkers, porters, shoe-shine boys and other railway staff for timely identification and referral of cases to us.
3. Visiting all railway police stations on a regular basis to expand our base and register our presence before them.

C. Work at Mahim Police Station

For a long time, we had been getting feedback from criminal justice functionaries, specially the police, about the need to help victims and families of victims of violent crimes such as murder, attempted murder, assault, sexual crimes, etc. Many a police officer had asked us what we were

doing to help families where the bread winner had been killed or brutally injured.

Considering the absence of a victim relief and assistance programme, we decided to take up work with criminally victimised persons and their families. The permission for working with the victims of crime was granted by the D.C.P., Zone IV. We chose Mahim Police Station as our base and started work from 5th July, 1999, with the objective of identifying the needs and understanding the situation of all victimised persons and intervene where ever necessary.

Initially, we had planned to check out the scope for social work with all victims. We had requested for cases of victims to be referred to the worker. Having seen that there is almost no scope for social work intervention in cases of property offences such as theft, robbery, etc., our target group was shifted towards victims of violent crimes. However from statistics of the number of cases referred to us, it appears that the number of violent crimes registered within the jurisdiction of Mahim Police Station does not provide enough work for a full time worker. Therefore, we are planning to visit other police stations of Zone IV regularly.

A lot of our time has so far, has been devoted to explaining our role to the police both at the police station and at the beat offices (chowkies). Due to an insufficient case load, the worker began to take up N.C. matters where the potential for violence existed and prevention of work was possible. Few cases were refered and others were taken up the worker. Most of the cases which were referred were either family disputes or mentally disturbed cases, and some times neighbourhood disputes. On the whole it appeared that emotionally unsupported and financially weak persons formed the group who require our services.

The worker has spent most of her time working with mentally disturbed cases - paying home visits, hospital visits, identifying organisations for their care, and medical trusts. The types of cases taken up by the social worker include:

- families of murder victims,
- victims of sexual abuse, marital disupte, alcohol abuse, etc.
- mentally disturbed and their families
- cases of neighbourhood disuptes
- harrasment of senior citizens

- cases of destitute women
- minors involved in love affair cases
- victims of burns
- young girls in prostitution
- juvenile delinquents
- children requiring assistance

Case Illustrations:

1) Case of a burn victim

In the Police Station, the worker heard from the staff about this case. She took the details of the case and paid a home visit. The case was recorded as an accidental death (the cooking stove had burst). The worker also got the information that the victim's husband was an alcoholic and there were frequent conflicts between them. They had two children.

When the worker paid the first home visit, she saw that victim's husband, S, also had some injuries. He needed medical and personal attention as he could not get up or do anything. Someone was required to look after him till he recovered. His hands and legs were burnt. But nobody from either spouse's family was ready to stay with S or take him with them. The marriage had taken place within the family (the victim's father was S's maternal uncle). The victim's father tried to convince S's sister to look after Sanjay for some days. But she had already stayed for more than one week and was not willing to stay longer.

S was in a handicapped state, the children had go to school and the economic situation was also not good. The worker convinced the victim's sister to take the children with her and we agreed to look after S's medication. She agreed but was not ready to take full responsibility alone. She complained about her other sister who used to often live in this house, but now when his situation warranted, she had vanished from the scene. Nothing much about the accident was discussed.

When the worker took the father outside to get medicines, she asked him what he felt about the accident. But he did not say anything. "Amchi Mulgi Gelye , Atha kunala bolun kai faida". Amala kuna badal kahich nahai bolayach" (our daughter is gone, now what is the use of talking to anyone. We do not want to say anything about anyone). The worker felt that as the

marriage had been within the family, they did not want to disclose anything. He said that S used to drink a lot. From their conversation, the worker felt that he had doubts about S but was not ready to speak out against him. Children aged four and two years went with the maternal grand parents to their native place.

Since the children were witness to the incident and were very young, our worker decided to follow up the case in the native place. She referred the children to a psychiatrist to assess if the children were affected. On visiting the village, she realised that S had not met the children for four months. The family felt that he must be scared to come there. They asked the worker to tell him to come and meet the children. The elder child was not talking much and they felt that if the father came, he may feel better.

On coming back, the worker tried to contact S by paying a visit to his house, but he was not at home. According to a neighbour, S had gone to his sister's house (the one who used to visit them very often). The worker went to the sister's house but he was not there too. The worker kept messages for him asking him to contact her at the police station or in our Office at Worli. A few days later, he called at Prayas and the worker told him to go and visit his children. He promised to go but did not go. Later, the worker realised that he was not going for his work too, citing his poor health as a reason. The worker felt that due to some reason, he was afraid to go for work.

Finally, the worker approached the investigation officer in the case for guidance and help. The worker got some very useful information. S had borrowed Rs. 40,000/- from his office, apart from loans from his colleagues. He used to beat his wife, demanding money from her to support his drinking habit. Persons who has loaned him money used to come to their house looking for him, asking her to pay back. There were continuous fights at home. The officer also said that S had exhausted his leave, and was now on leave without pay. She came to know that if S did not join back work within three months, he would be removed from the job. The job was a central government job with a monthly salary of Rs.7000/-.

The worker realised that if S lost his job, he would be in heavy debt and his children's future would be at stake. The worker also sensed that his sister was suppporting him (probably due to his job), and that she must be getting something from it.

The worker again contacted S and accompanied him to the Police Station to get a certificate for the loss of his medical insurance papers (C.G.H.S. card) and his Identity Card. After this was done, she went with him to his office to submit an application for issuing duplicate cards. Later, on the same day, she met his boss and convinced him to give S a chance to reform himself. After that visit, he was confident to go back to work. But he still did not contact his children.

His father-in-law contacted his office to know whether he had joined back work or not. They are very poor and are not able to bear the financial burden of looking after the children. The worker has decided to have a joint meeting with S, his sister and his boss. Intervention in the case is on-going.

2) Case of harassment of a senior citizen

A sixty-eight year old woman, named M, had come to the police station complaining of harassment by her son, daughter-in-law and daughter (who was staying with her husband and a child). She was a regular visitor at the police station, and the police had been giving her assistance to some extent. According to M, her daughter-in-law had assaulted her and a case was registered against her son and her daughter, who were out on bail.

The worker wanted to meet the other members of the family, but M refused to allow her to meet them. Initially, the worker felt that it was a family and property dispute. At the same time, M started asking the worker for money - for travelling, food and medical expenses. She would call up the worker saying that she was feeling very hungry and had not eaten for two days, and would request the worker to take her to a vegetarian restaurant. The worker aceeded to such requests on humanitarian grounds.

Yet, the worker felt that M needed adequate support in terms of emotional, legal and economic interventions by a specialised agency. She accompanied M to the Special Cell for Women and Children (TISS) for further assistance. M also complained about her daughter who used to abuse and steal her money (whatever she had/or given by the worker).

The worker started counselling with her daughter about her future, about her children and her idle husband. For her economic rehabilitation, she was referred to our Workshop for Training and Employment. She later got a job as a telephone operator at Juhu. The worker did continuous and weekly

follow up for some time, and this positively affected M's situation. As of now, she does not have too many complaints. Her son is also giving her some money. The worker pays M occasional visits to give her moral and emotional support.

In the course of our work with various persons approaching the police for assistance, we realised the need to build a directory of community services/resources for referral. The social worker did some ground work and has been able to find resources which will help our client group. The following organisations/individuals have agreed to extend their services to our client group (in the jurisdiction of Mahim Police Station):

1. Support: Based in three centres at Mahim, Matunga and Dadar. Services include a Balwadi, day-care centre and tution classes for school going children, working on citizen rights, women's health issues, drug abuse, HIV-AIDS and vocational training amongst youth.

2. Shri Bhupen Mehta: Financial help to individuals.

3. Maitri: A self-help group for mentally disturbed persons and counselling.

4. Samaritans: Day-care centre for the mentally disturbed.

5. Family Welfare Agency: Day-care centre for the mentally disturbed and follow-up with their families.

6. W.I.T: Vocational training and income generation for women

7. Vatsalya: Day-care centre and night shelter for street children

8. Mahim Church Literacy Programme: Tuition classes for poor children, tailoring classes for women and savings group for economically under priveleged

9. Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal: Income generation for women's groups

10. Aaraish: Home-based work for women

Workers observations:

1. Registering of complaints in certain types of cases e.g. cheating, or in cases when the complainant is from the streets (without support), is a regular visitor (as a complainant) to the police station or comes from an area known for petty complaints often depends on the officer sitting in the duty room.
2. Duty officers feel social worker's intervention is needed in property disputes (being a non-police matter), and at same time feel that there is nothing much that we can do.
3. There is a tendency to avoid registration of missing complaints, if the missing person is an adult or from the streets.

The police refer cases to the social worker which they feel are non-criminal in nature and require a lot of time and paperwork e.g. referring a person to psychiatric care (under the Mental Health Act), or a child to the Observation Home (under the JJ Act), or referring an alcoholic or a drug addict to a de-addiction centre.

VI. RESCUED WOMEN & GIRLS (FROM PROSTITUTION) UNIT

Prayas has been working with women and girls rescued from red light areas. The primary objective of providing services in this area is to work out an individual plan for each of our clients, so as to provide her with opportunities for creating an alternative lifestyle.

Workers have been based at the Nagpada Police Station, the Protective Home for Women (rescued from red light areas) and the Special Juvenile Home (for girls rescued from prostitution). Some cases have been referred by NGOs based in the community, who are in contact with such persons. Efforts to start a workshop for women near the vicinity of the red light area in Mumbai Central are in progress.

A. Nagpada Police Station

The services of the social worker based at the police station can be broadly categorised in the following areas:

a) Counselling and information giving:
   - Provide moral and emotional support to the rescued woman/girl
   - Instill belief in the woman/girl about her will to get out of prostitution
   - Explode myths about being treated as a criminal on being rescued (as told to her by the gharwalis /managers at the brothel)
   - Information with regard to possible options for an alternative lifestyle
   - Informing her about procedures being followed and her legal rights

b) Mobilizing police action for rescuing her children from the brothel (after the mother has been rescued), or her relatives/friends
c) Mobilizing police action for recovery of her property from the brothel

Following this, women are sent to Protective home (for temporary care, under court orders) while minors are kept in the Special Juvenile Home, or some other children's institution (under orders of the Juvenile Welfare Board).

Cases are also being referred by NGOs working in the red light area, by the police or by clients who have themselves moved out of prostitution. A few illustrations:

1) A voluntary orgainsation requested the police station worker to co-ordinate with the police so as to execute a rescue operation, for a woman who was

known to be in need of rescue. However, following rescue, a man (suspected to be involved in running a brothel) came forward as her relative and she agreed to go with him.

After follow-up visits were made to meet the woman and discuss with her possible options available to her, she requested that she be helped in shifting to an institution for safety. She was accordingly shifted to the Government Protective Home. She was finally sent with police escort, back to her native place in West Bengal to her brother's home, with her consent.

2) The police referred to the social worker a young boy whose mother was involved in prostitution. The boy was unhappy about this. He was interested in pursuing his education and some training. Regular and persistent counselling was provided to help him deal with the situation. Considering his age and interests, he was provided with training in making cloth bound stationery items at our Workshop for Training and Employment in Worli. He has moved to a foster home, so that he can re-start his education. Efforts are on to admit him to the National Open School. We have also established contact with his mother, with an objective to motivate her to leave prostitution.

3) Some of our clients who have moved out of prostitution have also been referring women in need of assistance to Prayas. These are women who are in a position to move out of the red light area and are not bound by any gharwali. They have paid back all their 'debts' and are free to leave. The women referred to us also had children. When informed that there are options for their children to be taken care of and support systems for themselves (particularly shelter), they decided to approach Prayas. Options for pursuing training courses at our Workshop or at other training institutes is emphasized upon.

4) A client who received information about a woman desirous of being rescued, sought the worker's help to communicate this information to the police station concerned. The police were successful in rescuing the woman. Our client's identity however was exposed to anti-social elements in the red-light area. She feared the consequences of her action. This had a deep impact on her mental and emotional status. The social worker had to constantly guide her and provide her with support, until she felt secure and confident of herself. The woman rescued, was sent to the Protective Home and later repatriated to her state (Karnataka), with her consent.

B. Protective Home

Case work:

Most cases required the worker to assist in building supports for women/girls (who wanted to return home) in their respective hometowns. This year contacts were established in districts of the following States:

a) West Bengal
b) Assam
c) Karnataka
d) Gujarat
e) Andhra Pradesh
f) Madhya Pradesh
g) Tamil Nadu
h) Delhi

In many cases, if the client or the social worker is apprehensive about acceptance in the family, contact has to be first established with the family. Often, the addresses given by the client-resident is not accurate and hence, letters may not reach. Therefore, the family has to be traced with the help of some local person/agency.

The choice of this local agent has to be done with care, as the background of the client has to be revealed to him/her. This person should be thoroughly reliable, should be sympathetic to this group and should possess some social work and networking skills. We have taken the help of district officials such as the collector, superintendent of police or welfare officer for this purpose. We have also taken the help of individuals and NGOs known to us.

These persons have taken great pains in tracing the address of the family and assessing the acceptance of the woman back in the family. The background of how the woman reached Protective Home is usually not disclosed to the family, unless the client herself has permitted us to reveal her past (usually to one member of the family e.g. the mother).

The availability of a local person is of great help, even after the client goes back – acting as a guide-cum-counsellor to the client and acting as our contact person, in case of a future need. Besides, networking with organisations/individuals is also

done to support our clients after they go back to their families or to their native state/place. All this requires prompt and persistent correspondence by phone, fax, or mail.

A major part of the work inside the institution consists of counselling and guidance. It has to be realised that these women have been through a harrowing past of deceit, fraud, cheating, betrayal, kidnapping, rape, forced confinement, brainwashing and breaking of their will. A sense of fatalism has crept into their psyche and they have little faith in humanity (sometimes, their own family members have duped them into the trade).

The social worker's role assumes significance in this context. She has to help the client identify her fears and apprehensions and think of possible options in the face of such adversity, She also has to make efforts to improve her self-esteem, through giving emotional support, counselling and helping her think positively. She also has to assure the client that she will be available for guidance and support, if needed and contacted.

While most work is carried out during the time the woman is in the institution, there have been cases where the worker continues intervention (in response to a need expressed by the client), following her discharge from the institution. The worker is required to provide a range of services such as:

- making home visits to meet with family members and help in settling misunderstandings
- arranging for shelter
- financial assistance for house repair
- mobilizing financial support for daughter's marriage
- making oneself available to the client for discussing problems and changes she has to deal with and provide necessary guidance.

A few cases have been described below:

1) Deepa, married after she was discharged from the Protective Home, was living in Gujarat, along with her husband and his family. A few days after the marriage, we received a message from her saying that she was in a problem situation and wanted assistance. The social worker visiting Protective Home, and a worker (of Prayas) based at Bharuch district visited the family and made an assessment of the case.

The husband was reported to have been physically abusive towards his wife. While the in-laws were supportive to Deepa, they did not/could not intervene in the situation. Our intervention resulted in the family deciding that they would try to deal with the situation, and would get in touch with us if necessary. Our workers left after informing Deepa that she could get in touch with the worker from Bharuch if a problem arose again.

Around a month later, Deepa was brought to Mumbai by her father-in-law, as her husband had severely beaten her and had told her to leave his home. She was threatened with dire consequences if she returned. The father-in-law requested that she be provided with shelter in Mumbai for a temporary period, during which time, he would try to convince his son to reconcile with his wife. Deepa was also reluctant to return to her husband's home.

However, the father-in-law has not yet returned. By now, Deepa had decided that she wanted to end the relationship. She is presently employed as a domestic maid and is supporting herself. The worker maintains contact with her, providing guidance so as to ensure that she is not exploited due to her vulnerable position. She is also interested in pursuing her rights (in terms of alimony or maintenance), for which we have got in touch with a women's organisation. She is now exploring the possibility of re-marriage.

2) A girl who had been working as a domestic maid for ten months following her discharge, now wanted to return home to her mother. In the past, her mother had refused to accept her back home, as a result of which she was apprehensive about the family's response. Yet, she was determined to return to her family. However, a negative response from her mother would put her in a vulnerable position, where the possibility for exploitation would arise.

Therefore, two workers of Prayas accompanied her with the objective of building contacts for her in her home state, if received negatively by the mother. This was also an opportunity for our workers to study the specific situations women face in the process of repatriation. Contacts were established with the Superintendents of Police of Ananthapur and Cuddapah districts, Andhra Pradesh, and an organisation that would provide her with shelter and work with her family. Since the mother was not willing to accept the girl initially, she was referred to an institution. She was later motivated to accept her daughter.

An officer was appointed by the police to maintain informal contacts with the girl, so as to ensure that she receives support whenever required. A social worker from an organisation, 'Young India', maintained contact with her. Correspondence between our worker and this organisation continued so as to discuss progress of the case. Rehana is now married by her own choice and she continues to stay in touch with the above mentioned organisation.

The social worker of 'Young India' played a significant role in providing regular and consistent guidance. We have observed that this is very important for helping a person deal with the changes she has to face and settle down.

3) Since the maternal family of a mentally disturbed girl in Mumbai was not willing to come forth to take responsibility, the man who had promised to marry her was approached. Regular visits were made to assess his interest in pursuing a relationship with her. After being convinced of his sincerity and genuineness, the institution staff decided to discharge the woman.

They are now married, and she appears to be settling down in her new role.

Work with the System:

There seemed to be a decline in the number of raids conducted by the police. Meetings were therefore held with the D.C.P. Zone II (under whose jurisdiction a large part of a red-light area falls in). Following this, there was an increase in the number of raids.

Under Section 15 of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), rescued women are required to be produced before the appropriate magistrate, who would then pass further orders for their safe custody. The act provides for an inquiry to be conducted before the woman is discharged. This procedure facilitates proper planning that is required for rehabilitation. However, this procedure was not being practiced. Women were directly being sent to the Protective Home and sometimes being discharged before a proper plan was made.

A meeting was organised with the D.C. P. Zone II, wherein the Probation Officer and Medical Officer of Protective Home, Probation Officer of the Special Juvenile Home and Prayas staff attended. Following this, police personnel in that jurisdiction were instructed to follow required procedures.

C. *Vocational Training Programmes*

Vocational training is imparted by our staff, with the help of outside organisations to the residents of Protective Home, and the Special Juvenile Home. Activities and training programmes will soon also commence at the new workshop at Mumbai Central. These activities and training are conducted to:

1. Impart at least one skill to the residents
2. Increase their self-confidence
3. Help them identify their talents
4. Build some proof that would help them fight any stigma or allegation about their past in their native place.

i. Special Juvenile Home

Training is imparted in the following areas:

a) Cross stitch
b) Woolen items
c) Painting
d) Soft toys
e) Sand painting
f) Beaded wall hangings
g) Wall hangings

On completion of training, and at the time of discharge, trainees are given a kit that comprises of items required to prepare the products taught to them, and the finished products that they have prepared in the institution.

There have been instances when these products were sold to visitors at the institution. Girls have been eager to sell these products as most do not possess any money. As a result, our worker set a price for the products (as per prevailing marker rates), while girls were also informed about the value of the product, so as to ensure that they be sold at the right price. The probation officer of the institution maintained a record of items sold and the money each girl has earned. The same was handed over to her on discharge.

An issue that we have been confronted with is that of the extent to which this training provides for a girl's economic rehabilitation. Merely providing training is not sufficient. In order to avail of government schemes for self-employment, she is

required to possess a government-recognised certificate. Besides, considering that girls hail from different states, each having it's own peculiarities, and market demands; a wide range of training programmes is necessitated. Therefore, this year an attempt has been made to co-ordinate with government-recognized vocational training institutes, with the purpose of organising different training programmes inside the institution.

Accordingly, Prayas approached Maharashtra Vyavasay Margdarshan Kendra and organised a course on jewellery- making and flower making. This required co-coordinating between this organisation and the institution staff (i.e., the Superintendent, Probation Officer, Teachers). Prayas sponsored the trainees' fees to MVMK, and the cost of materials required for the course. Inmates of the Reception Centre (which shares the same premises as the Special home) also attended the course.

Certificates were awarded to the trainees during the Women's Day celebrations, by authorities of Maharashtra Vyavasay Margadarshan Kendra. An interesting indicator of the success of this course is that all trainees revealed their original names (something that girls are often reluctant to do), in order to ensure that the certificate is made out on their real name.

A few issues that were explored with the trainees during this programme:

a) Method of making purchases of material
b) Alternative materials that could be used if the required materials were not available in the trainee's hometown
c) Decoration/presentation of items so as to improve sale value
d) Preparing budget and pricing of items
e) Whether the certificate would prove to be beneficial in obtaining a job
f) Whether it is possible to obtain a loan for self employment on the basis of the certificate
g) Training programmes that are area specific and relevant (to the state where the trainee is to return)

A meeting was held with the staff of the institution to assess the manner in which the programme was organised and discuss suggestions for future programmes.

The staff of the institution has provided immense support and co-operation. While inmates of the Home used to be housed in the premises of the Reception Centre, last October, a special barrack was constructed and allotted for housing inmates of

the Special Juvenile Home (as a result of a writ petition filed by Prerana. an NGO. in the Mumbai High Court about the conditions in the Special Juvenile Home). After shifting to the new barrack, Prayas was sanctioned a glass cupboard, and a tailoring machine. This has proved to be beneficial for conducting training programmes.

Other activities:

a) Sale of products: At a sale organised by Concern India Foundation, a stall was allotted to Navjeevan Mahila Vastigraha (Protective Home), for exhibiting items prepared by inmates and their sale. Around 400 products prepared by girls from the Special Home were also exhibited. Of these, 355 products were sold out.

b) Republic Day celebrations: Being a closed institution, many inmates resent the fact that they are not permitted to move out and feel they are missing out on certain things in life. Therefore, the idea of organising a programme to celebrate Republic Day was thought of, as a way of providing girls with an opportunity to exhibit their talents, plan out the programme, and do something apart from the routine tasks. With the help of student social workers from Nirmala Niketan - College of Social work, the above-mentioned programme was organised. At the end of the programme each girl was given a small gift by Prayas.

c) The inmates received an order for preparing floral decoration for a Yuvati Mela, organised by a voluntary organisation .

d) Screening of hindi films were organised for recreational purpose.

Visits were made to organisations/training institutes imparting training in a wide range of courses like catering, soft toys, flower making, sand painting, beauty care, mehandi designing, screen painting etc; and also those that provide information and loans for in setting up small scale industries. The possibility of conducting these courses inside the institution is being explored.

ii. Protective Home

Efforts are made to involve inmates in any of the following activities:

a) Crochet and preparation of woolen items
b) Tailoring

c) Painting
d) Flower making
e) Making of wax items, show pieces, wall hangings
f) Fabric painting
g) Mehendi design
h) Beautician
i) Embossed Painting

Women are given a kit comprising of basic material and equipment required to make items learnt in the institution and items prepared by her.

This year, Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) in collaboration with Khadi Village Industries Commission organised a training course in candle making and chalk making, for inmates of beggars home and those from Protective home. The Director of MAVIM requested our worker's assistance in assessing each trainee's interests with regard to training. Face-sheets for gathering information were jointly prepared by MAVIM and Prayas. A staff member of the institution, along with the Prayas worker, held discussions on areas of interest with each of the trainees.

Arrangements were made for conducting a course in jewellery making, in co-ordination with a training institute. However, the teacher assigned to carry out the course stopped visiting the institution. On contacting her, our worker was told that given the fact the trainees were rescued from prostitution, she feared being infected with HIV. Attempts were made to convince her of the fact that the risk of contracting the virus was negligible, but to no avail.

iii. Mumbai Central Workshop

It was evident to us that the services we provid helped in meeting the needs only of rescued women or desirous of leaving prostitution. There is a large group of women who feel that they cannot leave the trade immediately as they have no other support systems or skills to take care of themselves or their families in future.

During raids, our worker at the police station was constantly confronted with women who did not want to move out of prostitution, but were interested in obtaining information about possibilities of being trained in certain skills, children's education, loans for self employment. Since they are not in favour of going to any institution, contact could not be sustained with them.

Given the fact that they would rather avoid going to the police station, approaching the social worker at the police station is something they are reluctant to do. There were some who wanted to explore other areas, undergo training, while continuing in prostitution. Scope for exploring other options are not available as our interaction with them is limited to the time they spend at the police station (which may range from ½ hour to a couple of hours).

Wanting to continue life in red-light area could be attributed to a variety of factors. A common point underlying this decision is the fact that a woman was most often a victim of circumstances and was compelled to continue earning through prostitution. It was observed that once she accepts that this is where she is destined to be, she adopts a fatalistic attitude towards life. " Yehi apni zindagi hain." Being exploited is not an issue that she attaches too much importance to. She believes that there is nothing better that she deserves and not capable of doing anything else.

Women charged for indecent behaviour under Section 110 of the Bombay Police Act were required to pay a fine, failing which she had to serve a short term in prison. After placement of a social worker at the police station, such persons were referred to the social worker for counseling (and were not fined by the police). A few issues that came to light during our interaction with this group were:

a) All women were above the age of 30-35 years.
b) They do not foresee any benefits of moving out of prostitution and are unsure about how they can spend the rest of their life outside the red light area.
c) Most of these women have accepted the fact that they will continue in profession.
d) Many of the women were devdasis. Some women were ill. They had taken loans for medical expenses, and were now trying to pay back their loans.

The group of devdasis (mentioned above) sought guidance from the worker on issues like need for land/housing in their village, children's education, information about schemes available for them. They met the worker thrice. Following the transfer of the D.C.P. of that zone, this practice of referring women to the social worker was discontinued.

A common response to this group is a skeptical one – " Such women can never change."

However, it was felt that starting training programmes in the vicinity of the red light area would give us an opportunity to work with such women, and

empowering them with required skills and information that would, over a period of time, motivate them to consider an alternative lifestyle..

This idea has received the support of police officers, organisations working on the issue of prostitution in that area, and from women who had moved out of prostitution, and who were in touch with us.

We have been working towards setting up a Training cum Income Genration Centre in Mumbai Central for this purpose.

Visits were made to organsations/training institutes to explore the following:

a) To find out the type of training programmes already available for women in the community.
b) To explore the possibility of our clients gaining access to these programmes
c) To identify the type of training that need to be imparted by Prayas
d) To explore whether outside agencies could be invited to the workshop for conducting training

Visits were made to identify stores /shops selling material required for training at a concessional rate.

Locating space for this purpose proved to be a difficult task. After making rounds to officials from different departments, including those from the Police, Municipal Ward Offices, Education Department of the B.M.C., we finally approached the Municipal Commissioner. Two rooms in a municipal school (Guilder Lane Municipal School) situated close to the red light area, and hence accessible to the group, for was allotted to us.

Procedures for occupying the room were to be completed. This involved preparing the required documents, visits to the school, the ward office, and the education department of B.M.C. Often papers were shifted back and forth, thus resulting in delay. Both rooms were in need of repair work, which started in April 2001. This repair work is nearing its completion and we will son start this workshop.

VII. AFTERCARE UNIT

The Aftercare unit was set up to look into the rehabilitation needs of persons approaching us for help after their release from prison. Over the years, referrals started coming from NGOs (working with women, children, street youth, substance abusers, slum communities, etc.), ex-clients, staff or ex-staff, persons who knew about us or our work, people living in and around BDD chawls, prison or police officers, judiciary, probation officers, etc. Some even came by reading about us in the media, welfare directories, our board put up in Esplanade Court or simply chanced into our office.

Broadly speaking people have approached us for the following types of help:

- Legal guidance and aid
- Settlement of family matters
- Resolution of marital conflicts
- Services for children
- Vocational training
- Job placement
- Financial assistance
- Problems related to the police

The aftercare unit caters to the needs of anyone approaching us affected by or vulnerable to crime or prostitution. Most clients of this unit are those being released from prison. A few cases of women who have come out of prostitution, boys or youth going on the 'wrong path' and/or vulnerbale to crime/prostitution are also referred to us. The other cases which come to our office-cum-contact centre are either referred to the other units (such as legal aid, police station) or other agencies working in the field (working with women, children, substance abuse, mental health, etc.).

The type of services provided in aftercare can be categorised into

a. Emergency assistance
b. Long-term work

Emergency assistance includes the services provided to clients who approach Prayas in a distress situation. The problems presented require immediate assistance and the aftercare worker takes an on-the-spot decision whether or not to help and the type of help required, after talking to the client and assessing the situation. Situations such as lack of shelter, no

money to travel home (after release from prison), illness requiring hospitalisation, no money to buy medicines, no food to eat at home, no clothes/footwear, etc. are attended to immediately. The problems are such that the immediate situation has to be tided over, before a long-term plan can be worked out with the client. The types of services provided in such situations include:

- Arranging for temporary shelter
- Providing for travelling expense to go home/back to family
- Financial assistance for temporary subsistence
- Reimbursement/payment of medical bills
- Hospitalisation/medical treatment
- Purchasing a pair of clothes, footwear, rainwear, etc.
- Purchasing food grains
- Repairs of hut/zopada

Long-term work:

1. Apart from these needs, clients also approach us for job placement or loan for self-employment. By and large, it is difficult for us to find jobs due to lack of suitable skills of the client and reluctance on the part of employers to employ our clients (owing his/her past background). Sometimes, personal contacts of workers are used for this purpose. Those who approach us for jobs have a minimum salary expectation of Rs.2000/- to 2500/- p.m. but do not have the requisite skills to match the salary expectations. Our effort in such cases is to motivate them to take up a training based on their past skills, talent and interest.

Some clients also make requests for loans for self-employment. These are of three types – those who are already doing some small business and would like to expand it, those who have a past background in self-employment and would like to re-start it, or those who feel that they have the knowledge/skill to start a small business. Our efforts in the past to help our clients start some business had invariably ended in failure. This was because we were not equipped to assess the entrepreneurial skill or capability of a person approaching us. We found that these clients lacked marketing skills and saving ability, did not know how to handle money or deal with the municipal/police authorities, and were easily discouraged by failure.

We decided to depute two of our staff members (one male and one female worker) to specialise in this department i.e. small business enterprise (SBE).

These workers have been visiting government departments, NGOs and individuals connected with SBEs. They have also been collecting information and networking with government scheme for self-employment such as the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (implemented by the BMC).

They have also been collecting data on attributes required to be a successful entrepreneur, by talking to practicing entrepreneurs and experts in the field. We hope that their ground-work in this area will equip our clients with the necessary skills and capability to start and sustain SBEs. Our effort is also to tie-up such clients with individuals and institutions, who can guide and sustain this process.

2. Another area of long-term intervention is work with families. The aftercare worker devotes substantial time and effort in trying to repair the relationship between the client and his/her family. This process is more concentrated in those cases whose families live in Mumbai or nearby areas. Contact is maintained with upcountry families through letters and phone-calls. This work involves a lot of counselling, bargaining and negotiation of space for both the conflicting parties.

Success is dependant on being able to arrive at a mutually agreed upon minimum conditions. It also greatly hinges on some mutual love left in the relationship in question. After a continuous process of assessment and review, the worker decides to stop intervention (at least temporarily), if his/her efforts do not result in any forward movement in the relationship. The only alternative left in such a situation is to strengthen the economic base and self-reliant capacity of the client.

3. Work with the police is also long-term. The fear of police action due to past criminal record is common amongst most clients approaching us, particularly if they are repeat offenders. We have worked out a policy whereby we ask the client to observe certain conditions before approaching the police for their cooperation.

These conditions are:

- The client should not change his place of sleeping in the night (without a valid reason) and should inform us if he does so.
- The client will take up some employment/self-employment/training during the day.

- The client will spend his evenings by getting involved in some positive activity/hobby/recreation/training.
- The client will go to the police station whenever called.
- The client will maintain contact with his/her family or positive support (identified mutually by us) in his area of residence.

The client should abide by at least three of the above conditions before we approach the police requesting for their support in the rehabilitation process. These conditions have been arrived at by analysing the past ten years' data on aftercare. We felt that these are reasonable conditions to impose on a client and would help us to dialogue with the police. Work with the police involves meeting the investigation officer of the case concerned, the senior inspector of the police station, the D.C.P. of the Zone, or even the higher-ups if necessary in a case. A circular issued by the Additional C.P.(Crime), Mumbai Police, at our request, instructing all police stations to cooperate with our staff on the issue of rehabilitation, has been of great help in this connection.

4. On-going counselling and discussion with clients is a regular feature of aftercare work, as is keeping in touch with the client, his/her employer (if employment has been found through our contacts), family, etc. This is done either when the client approaches the worker for guidance/information, or when the worker decides to call the client to the office or pay a visit to his place. This process is continued till the worker feels that the process of re-integration has more or less set in.

Such sessions are focussed around issues such as frustration at work place, conflict with parent(s)/siblings, finding a life-partner, marital conflict, problems related to children, attitude of the police, lifestyle related problems (such as night life, addictions, gambling, spending time with friends, etc). The worker builds a relationship with the client, whereby he can take the liberty of raising any issue, however uncomfortable to raise, with the client or his/her significant others.

Very often, the worker is the only person in the client's life, whom he/she allows to raise or discuss such issues. These discussions help the aftercare worker to make a continuous assessment of his/her vulnerability to (how near or far the client is from) re-offending/going back to prostitution/addiction.

Aftercare Group:

This year, we felt the need to review the work done in aftercare in the last ten years. The need was felt as some of our clients were found to have gone back to crime, addiction or into oblivion. A team of ex and current prison and aftercare workers was formed under the guidance of the Project Advisor. The group met weekly once for three months continuously. A list of such clients (who had been re-arrested, got sucked into an addictive lifestyle, or about whom proper information was not available) was made, and each case was analysed to identify the factors responsible for these negative developments in their lives. The objective was also to devise a strategy to work with these persons and a plan of action for future aftercare work.

After three months of rigorous analysis, a plan of action emerged. We are currently in the process of testing out this plan. Broadly speaking, four areas have emerged for intervention. These are – specific inputs in the area of residence of the client (vis-vis family, community supports, etc.), strengthening the economic base of the client, re-directing the relationship with Prayas towards increased self-confidence and helping the client deal with problems related to past life (such as suspicious attitude of the police, pending cases in court, vulnerability of addictive lifestyle, old networks, etc.).

Another outcome of this process has been the setting up of the Wednesday Group Meetings. It was felt that client participation in decision making was one way to avoid mistakes in the aftercare process. Many of our clients are now re-integrated in society and are living as contributing members of their families and communities. They have the insights of having been through a process and have successfully overcome it or are on the way to overcoming it. Some of them are at an advantage over us, as far understanding the struggles that a client may be going through and his/her vulnerabilities. They are also better able to see through any attempts by clients to manipulate us. We felt that there was tremendous scope and opportunity to share and learn from them – a space where we act as partners to the process of change.

Thus a space and time was created – Wednesday afternoons at 3.00 p.m., when the aftercare team, ex-clients and clients could come together and discuss cases openly. Any person approaching us was first asked to attend this weekly meeting before rendering any help or support (except for emergency assistance). In these meeting, the agenda consisted of:

- Interviewing a new client to identify his skills, past experience, jobs held, talents, interests, hobbies and future plans. The plan was worked out in consultation with the group members present for the meeting.
- Consulting the members about a difficult case in Prayas, to decide the next course of action (without naming the client).
- Sharing any new plans being worked out in Prayas with regard to aftercare.
- Taking the guidance of the group on issues such as job placement, training, self-employment, etc.
- Discussion of any issue related to a client's life brought up by any member.
- Discussion of broader issues such as changing societal attitudes towards our group, frustrations of our youth, family values, etc.

These group sessions have greatly helped the aftercare team in avoiding mistakes, reinforcing decisions taken, making assessments and acting as a guide to action. It has also given a regular space to our clients to voice their opinions, share their thoughts and frustrations and feel a part of the decision making process in Prayas. It is one place where the client-worker division melts and everyone participates as an equal member. Most importantly, it has introduced a sense of accountability in the workers in the area of aftercare.

Case Illustrations:

Alikhan : Alikhan was released from Byculla Prison in December 2000. This was the first case from the Byculla prison. Alikhan, aged 19 years, had been in Mumbai since the last one and half years with his friends from his hometown. He had worked with one family as a house-help for about eight months. He had been arrested for theft in the employer's house. After his release, he came to Prayas with a request for employment in hotel or restaurant and shelter for few days till he gets some employment.

When Alikhan came to Prayas, he was very depressed and his self-esteem was damaged. He was not confident or willing to find work as a house-help

any more, as according to him, his previous employer had cheated him and lodged him in prison. Prayas arranged for his temporary employment in our Workshop for Training and Employment and shelter in Shelter in 'Ghar ho to Aisa' at Dadar. After a few days we shifted him to 'Saathi' at Nagpada, for temporary accommodation in a group home and employment was provided in their workshop (which produces paper bags).

After two weeks, he met his friends at Mumbai Central and got a contact telephone number of his village. With his consent, our worker made a call and talked to her mother. Alikhan also had a conversation with her. They became very emotional to hear each other's voice. The worker subsequently had a discussion with Alikhan regarding his plans to go back to his family. The main hurdle, according to him, was his source of employment in his native place.

We contacted an official (the then collector of Betia District) of his native state (Bihar), who was known to us and requested him to put us in touch with the collector of Alikhan's native district. This offcial spoke to the collector concerned and requested him to help Alikhan in accessing some government sponsored income-generating scheme for low-income groups. Alikhan was interested and had previous experience in cattle rearing.

The worker spoke to his father about his plans to go back home. His father said that the family was most happy to have him back, as he was their only son. He said, "He is my child and I am capable of taking care of his life. You kindly make the arrangements to send him back as I cannot afford to come down to Mumbai to take him". As per his request, our worker made his travel arrangements and sent him home. After two days the worker called up his village and received confirmation of his arrival.

Prasad : He was an old client of Prayas with a problem of alcoholism. Prayas had put its effort and tried to reconcile the relationship with his family. He had settled in Kalyan, was not in touch with Prayas for the last three to four years.

At the end of January 2001, he came to our office. He was in a bad shape and was running high fever. We took him to Poddar Hospital but they refused to admit him. The doctor suspected Prasad had contracted tuberculosis (A+) and they do not have the facilities to treat such cases. The

worker then took him to a B.M.C. Primary Health Centre at Worli, where he underwent a general check-up and the doctor suggested that he goes for a sputum test. As per the suggestion, his sputum was checked and it was found that he was in a serious stage of tuberculosis.

Prayas took him to DOT Center (B.M.C. sponsored) run by Rotary International for further medical treatment and provided him with supportive nutrition for three months. After three months of regular treatment and follow-up, his health started improving and the results of his sputum test was found negative. He set up stall in Worli, selling butter milk and was earning Rs.60/- to Rs.70/- per day. This business could not continue for long with the onset of the monsoons.

He then decided to go the Kalyan and work in some dhaba (road side eatery) on the highway, as he had previous experience of the same. He has not got in touch with us since the last two months.

Some Significant Features of Work with Women in the Aftercare Unit

Most women being referred to the after care worker are those released from prison. There have been cases of women who have voluntarily moved out of prostitution and who have been referred to Prayas by organisations situated in red light areas. Occasionally male prisoners have sought the worker's help for assisting their wives who are outside prison.

A major problem faced by most women is that of shelter. This is primarily because a woman looses the support of her family under the following circumstances:

a) Re-entry into the area she resided prior to her arrest becomes difficult, due to the stigma of arrest/imprisonment.

b) Many women had moved out of their homes in an attempt to get away from difficult circumstances, but instead found themselves in a more vulnerable position, thereby drifting into crime or prostitution. Returning back home and having to deal with the same problem is not possible, unless both parties have come to an understanding and are willing to compromise.

c) Where a woman's stay has been in prison for a long period of time, she may lose her home during imprisonment. This could be due to the fact that she was not residing in a pucca house, due to which it may have been damaged/destroyed, encroached upon, or taken over by her in-laws/other relatives. Very often her family refuses to support her. For instance, in cases where the woman is accused for murder, and spends a longer period, she tends to lose the support of her in-laws as well as her maternal family.

d) The ability to re-enter the area of residence also depends on the kind of offence committed. For instance, if a woman accused of cheating persons in that locality, returning to that area not possible, as she would have to explain herself to the victims of the crime and may be pressurised to pay back the dues. Despite the fact that the family is willing to accept her, she is unable to return to the same locality.

e) Women dependent on drugs/alcohol lose the support of the family members.

Till the time relationships with family are not rebuilt/corrected, or till a person is in a position to independently make arrangements for herself, alternative shelter needs to be arranged. Identifying a shelter homes that is in congruence with individual needs and personality remains a difficult task.

Each shelter home has its set of rules and regulations that need to be abided by. However, we feel that women cannot merely be fitted into any service structure. It is necessary to make an assessment of the case and accordingly refer the person to a shelter home that would, to some extent, meet the individual person's needs.

In our experience, most women approaching us are unable to adjust in such shelter homes. This is largely because most homes are closed to the idea of permitting women to move outside the institution for receiving training or for employment. Since most women have held jobs in the past, the idea of not being allowed to work is discouraging. Besides, since a large number of persons approaching us have just been released from a custodial institution, staying once again in an institution that restricts the movement outside its premises, gives a feeling of having moved from one prison to another.

A short-term study was conducted in order to assess the services available for shelters in Mumbai, and services offered by each of them for women residents. This was done in an attempt to ensure that a woman referred to a home is able to make optimum use of the services being offered. A process has been initiated where the worker and client jointly decide on the home the latter is to be referred to. It is hoped that through this exercise, there is a balance between the service provided by a shelter home and the client's needs and life situation.

A common request is that they be provided with financial assistance for paying the deposit amount required for renting a room. In the past, arrangements have been made for the same from other voluntary organisations, and we have also provided for this ourselves. However, it is not financially feasible for us to meet such requests on a regular basis.

Work with mentally disturbed persons involves:

- Hospital visits for admission, and to discuss with the doctors the progress in the case, and options for rehabilitation.
- Encouraging and motivating the woman to receive treatment.
- Arranging for short term-shelter.
- Locating the family who reside in another state.
- Home visits to the family to assess situation and motivating them to assist the woman. Where women belong to a different state, networks are developed with local agencies in that area for paying such visits.
- Enlist the support of local agencies (in Mumbai and those outside if the woman belongs to another district/state) in order to follow-up the case and assist when required.

Economic rehabilitation:

One has to make an assessment of the woman's skills, aptitude, capabilities, and hold discussions in this regard, so as to help her decide an area of work/training that would be suitable for her. Women are motivated to pursue training accordingly. Arrangements are also made for providing on the job training. The worker may also have to provide legal information and assistance for obtaining loans for self-employment.

Future plans:

1. Setting up a rehabilitation centre for women that offers counselling, vocational training and scope for income generation.
2. Implementing the findings from the study done on matching of the client's need to the type of shelter home.
3. Holding group sessions where clients and workers can discuss problems encountered by both, and work out possible solutions.
4. Review of cases in order to identify factors significant to rehabilitation, make an assessment of interventions initiated by Prayas, our limitations, and work towards meeting existing gaps between needs and services.

Case Illustrations

1) Two women were arrested for cheating, for the first time. They were colleagues at work and were involved in some chit fund scheme at their work place. They had been arrested for duping the workers of money. Both were good friends, and had been working together since the past fifteen years. They had family support and came from financially stable backgrounds. After establishing contact with our worker, they requested to pay a home visit. The worker provided basic services and also paid home visits. Our worker found that their families were being harrassed by people who had lost their savings. After one year they were convicted.

Following their release, they were not willing to go home, as they felt that their families would be put to trouble. They wanted to become economically self-reliant and regain some of their lost status in the community. However, they had no other place to go to and were in need of shelter.

Arrangements were made for their stay in a shelter home. After sometime, they started earning and started staying in a rental house. They were scared of further police action on them. The worker helped them in getting a copy of the judgement order from the court, as a proof that they had served their sentence.Prayas provided them with a loan of Rs. 8000/- to start a small business (of making jewellery boxes). Their business is doing well. They are now thinking of returning to their families once they become economically stable.

This case requires constant follow-up and counselling by the worker.

2) A mentally disturbed woman was charged under section 379 of the I.P.C. After initiating interaction with her, it was realized that there was no link in her thought and conversation. She was suspected to have been suffering from some mild mental disturbance. Our worker referred the matter to the Prison Medical Officer, and she was subsequently referred to J.J. Hospital for further treatment.

Our worker regularly met and spoken to her in the hospital, in an attempt to gather information that would help in her rehabilitation. She hailed from Uttar Pradesh. The home address that she had given us was not complete. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to trace her family with the help of whatever information we had.

Contact was therefore established with a local NGO from her hometown. A home visit was paid and a report sent to us. She now started trusting and believing in us. During the 3 months of her stay in the hospital, there was considerable improvement in her condition. She was consequently referred back to Prison and was certified fit for trial. Since she had no supports in Mumbai, it was not possible for her to go out on bail. Our worker approached the concerned magistrate and presented the said facts before him. At the end of her trial, she was discharged in her case for want of evidence. The magistrate passed an order she be repatriated to her native place with police escort.

However, her arresting police station, which was required to arrange to escort her to her hometown, had not received this order. As she had been discharged in her case, the prison authorities could not keep her in prison any longer, as per the rules. Thus, we met the magistrate once more, in order to arrange for the order to be communicated to the police station concerned. Having accomplished this, arrangements were made for her to go back home along with police escort. The local NGO we had contacted in the past was requested to continue work with her and her family.

VIII. UMANG

The work of Umang group was under review this year. It was felt that the group could serve the function of sharing information of issues related to rehabilitation such as job placement, training, self-employment, citizenship and increasing the self-confidence of the client group. A worker was assigned for this purpose whose job was to collect information on these issues and organise programmes around them for the benefit of the clients. The worker visited various organisations such as Nav Nirman, Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (MCED), Maharashtra Vyavasaya Margdarshan Kendra, BMC, etc. He also formed a cultural group with the help of Umang members. Two programmes have been organised so far for Umang.

An annual day was organised which included a cultural programme – group dance and music, singing and elocution events followed by lunch. The second half of the day had five guest speakers. The first speaker was a resourse person from the MCED, who spoke about how to start a SBE and entrepreneurial skills required. The second speaker was a Community Development Officer from the BMC, who spoke about the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana and the criteria for availing the training and loan scheme.

The third and the fourth speakers were individual entrepreneurs and resource persons of Prayas, who had started from scratch and achieved some level of success in life. They spoke about how they reached where they were today and their recipie for success. All the speakers followed up their lecture with a question-answer session, where there was active participation of the members present. Finally, the Superintendent of Mumbai Central Prison spoke a few words of encouragement and gave advice to the Umang members.

The second programme was on saving schemes of banks, post office and insurance companies. The resource person called for the occasion promised to help any member from Prayas or Umang to work out and execute his/her saving plan. The lecture was followed by a discussion on the topic.

The eleventh issue of the Umang Patrika was released on the annual day, which contains writings and articles by Umang members, clients in prison, staff of Prayas and others associated with Prayas. The Patrika acts as an outlet for our client group to give expression to their creative potential and helps to create a positive image about our client group in society. The Patrika is edited by a Prayas resource person, Ms. Divya Jain.

IX. NETWORKING

As is clear from the description of work in prison, protective home and aftercare, a sizable section of the client group of Prayas consists of upcountry cases – persons whose families are not based in Mumbai and those who lack local support. The social workers working on such cases have to handle a variety of tasks and issues such as, tracing the family, establishing a meaningful relationship with them, locating local NGOs and resource persons (who could prove helpful to client after they go back to their native state/place). Most of the cases coming to the protective home require this kinds of intervention. Cases from the prison as well as C. S. T. Railway police station have also been helped in this manner.

Most of the cases are of women and girls who ran away/left their homes for one reason or another. Some of them would not like to go back to their families or native place (at least for the time being). However, for those who do want to go back Prayas has had to take the help of local NGOs, individuals and the administration (S.P., Collector, Welfare Dept., etc.) of that district from where the client hails. All this work requires continuous inputs and follow-up. We therefore, felt the need for a full-time worker to look these needs.

Objectives :

1. To help clients from outside Mumbai re-integrate in their native state or community.
2. To find resource persons and agencies helpful in the rehabilitation of such clients.
3. To work out a procedure of repatriation an re-integration of upcountry clients.
4. To establish a mechanism for follow-up of such cases.

In the six months since this unit was set up, the worker has handled seventeen cases and has been able to find resources in the native place of the clients who have helped with shelter, education, job, training, tracing the family and counseling.

Procedure being followed in the upcountry cases

1. Category - We have observed that the clients could be categorized into the following:

a. Those who are willing to go back in their families.
b. Those who want to become economically self-reliant.
c. Those who are not clear about their future plans
d. Those who have accepted crime or prostitution as a way of life.
e. Those who may be mentally or emotionally disturbed.
f. Those who are exploited by family members, relatives or others.

The planning, in terms of the counseling, networking and finding resources for a client has to done in accordance with the above.

2. Planning - There are two categories of clients, minor and adults. In the case of minors, the juvenile welfare board/court takes the decisons. In the case of adults, if he/she wants to go back to his native place, the planning should take place with the consent of the client, considering his/her socio-economic development in his/her native place (job, education, training, etc.).

3. Finding Contacts - The social worker tries to contact the family members or find out the resources in that particular area. A resource includes individuals, institutions, NGOs and government officials.

4. Tracing the family –

a. Writing a letter to the family, if the proper address is available.
b. Making a phone call or writing to the Collector/S.P./local NGO/ individual known to Prayas (who has some demonstrable skills in rehabilitation), and requesting them to trace the family and find out the socio- economic background and acceptance level of the family.
c. Sharing the information/report about the home situation with the client and planning the next step.
d. If the family is willing to accept the client in the family, then to request the local resource to maintain follow-up.
e. If the family cannot be traced or is unwilling to accept the client, then to find an agency providing institutional care and rehabilitation facilities:

5. Repatriation - There are three situations that we have encountered so far.
   a. If the family is interested in the client and the client wants to go back, the social worker may ask the family to come Mumbai and take back the client. If the family is not in a position (economically or physically) to come here, the social worker can try to arrange for an escort to go back, either through the police or a social worker.
   b. If the family is not interested in the client and the yet client wants to go back, the social worker may locate an agency providing shelter in that state (from where the client belongs) with the help of some local NGO/Offcial/Individual. The worker may also have to find out whether that organization is willing to take the responsibility of rehabilitation/follow-up of the client or not.
   c. The third situation is where the client is not willing to go back. In this situation, the social worker informs the family and the local aftercare unit of Prayas for future follow-up of the case.

6. Escort arrangement -
   a If the financial situation of the family is good, then call them to Mumbai to re-unite the client with the family.
   b If not, ask the police to escort the client to his/her native place. The social worker should provide the following details to the police:
      - Name and proper address of the client's family.
      - Name and address of other family members/relatives of the client
      - Name and address of the NGO who took the responsibility of rehabilitation of the client.
   c In certain cases, the social worker may assess that only sending the client home with police escort is not enough. She may feel the need to network with other NGOs and meet the client's family. In such situation, the social worker may escort the client along with the police/staff of the institution (e.g. protective home staff).

   Preparation to be done before going:
      - Travel and lodging arrangements
      - Detailed information of the place (if possible), total time taken to reach the destination, list of local NGOs, contact persons (addresses and telephone numbers)
      - Letters addressed to the district officials, organizations or to the family regarding arrival.

- Letter/certificate of bonafide of the social worker and the client from Prayas and the institution (from where the client is being sent).

d Arrange for escort by the institution staff.

7. Hand over – This should be done only to the person as planned and specified in writing to the escorting party i.e. to parents, specified individual, organization, district official, etc.

- The escorting party should take an acceptance letter from the person/agency for further follow up as well as for the record.
- The escorting party should have some discussion with the person/agency accepting responsibility of the client about the future plan of the client.
- Before leaving, the escorting party should give the Prayas address and telephone numbers to the client.

8. Follow up: This is a very important area of work. It involves maintaining a regular contact with the family, NGO, government official or resource person, till such time as is felt jointly necessary by the worker and the local contact. Sometimes, follow-up starts after an SOS or a letter by the client. The person identified for follow-up should be committed and available during any emergency faced by the client, including at odd hours of the night.

Networking Meeting – There are four to five organisations in Mumbai who are engaged in networking towards the rehabilitation of women and girls in or vulnerable to prostitution – both government and NGOs. But each agency's resources and contacts are limited. Therefore, an idea came to our mind that we could share our information and resources towards the rehabilitation of this client group. In March, 2001, a meeting was organised by the worker in the Protective Home. The organisations that attended the meeting were Saathi, Prerana, Protective Home, Special Juvenile Home, Female Beggars' Home and Prayas.

The meeting focused on issues related repatriation, re-integration and problems faced thereof. The group agreed to share their resources help each other in the rehabilitation of cases. It was decided to meet whenever there was a need.

Problems faced in networking:

a Sometimes, we do not receive replies from the families after writing to them. This could be either due to the address being not proper or due to the family's negative response towards the client.

b Sometimes, the institution or the NGO does not reply back or there is delay in reply and this creates doubts in our mind about the reliability of sending the client through that organisation.

c The organisation contacted does not having the services/facilities for our groups.

d The girls/women sometimes come back to Mumbai because of lack of sufficient income resourses or medical facilities in their native place or problems in the family relationships.

e Sometimes we are not aware of the resources or a contact person in the area where the client is desirous of going and it takes a lot of time to find out the proper rehabilitation organisation or shelter home or services like medical treatment.

Case Illustrations:

1) Radha was a 15 yrs. old girl. Three boys brought her (with three other girls) from West Bengal to Mumbai. They promised them that they will provide them with jobs in Mumbai. However, on reaching Mumbai, they took them to a lodge and tried to sexually abuse them. Radha was able to escape from the lodge. She met a lady in a suburban train, who in turn brought her to Prayas (as she knew one of our workers). Initially, we admitted her a shelter home.

According to Radha, her father had expired, and she was staying with her mother. Her brother is married and staying separately. Her brother forced her to get married with a Muslim boy from whom he had borrowed money. She refused the proposal and with her mother's consent left the home with the above mentioned group of girls and boys.

In the beginning, she was not ready to go back home. She was planning to get a job in Mumbai and earn something. Meanwhile, she had health problems. She knew a smattering of Hindi. We wrote to her mother on the address given by her, but the letter came back. The remark on the letter was, "Not known".

At the shelter home, she started settling down. Their staff and our worker kept a continuous follow-up with her. After a few months, she changed her mind and was willing to go back to her mother. But we were not sure whether her family members would accept her. Therefore, we wrote a letter to an NGO from her native state and requested them to pay a home visit and find out her family's reactions. But we did not receive a reply from them.

Radha started having adjustment problems at the shelter home and therefore, we had to shift her another home. She faced problems there too, mainly on account of the home being a closed institution. Once, she ran away from the institution with another resident (to that resident's house) but after few days, came back to the institution. Our worker met her once in fifteen days to work out a future plan with her. Gradually her mind changed from remaining in Mumbai to going back to her mother. We requested the Commissioner of Railway Police to arrange for her escort, to her hometown. After three months of stay, she went with police escort to her family.

2) Hema was aged around fifteen years. She was found alone on the streets, by a relative of one of our social workers. She kept her in her house for three to four days. Then the worker at Prayas brought her to our office.

When she was brought to the office she was not talking much. She requested the worker to arrange for some temporary shelter. We arranged for her shelter with a local NGO. Initially, she gave us false information regarding her family but as the relationship with the social worker developed, she gave detailed information about herself and her family. This process of building a relationship and making her confident took six months.

According to her, she was from the small tribal village of Raipur, in M.P. (now in Chhatisgarh). When she was in her tenth standard, her family members were started forcing her to get married. But she was interested in education and was planning to do a nursing course. As a result of this conflict, she left her home and came to Mumbai, thinking that she will be able to get a job easily in Mumbai and continue her education.

Initially, she was not ready to go back to her hometown. The worker met her regularly in the shelter home. She received training at the shelter home in typing and knitting. With the help of superintendent of shelter home, the worker planned to get her admission into the National Open School. We wrote a letter to her family to send her school-leaving certificate. For some

reason, they did not respond to our letter. Hema also wrote a letter to her family on our request, but in vain. Meanwhile, she got a part-time job in a private dental clinic. She found the education quite tough in Mumbai. She now requested us that she wanted to go back.

The worker tried to find an organization or individual in M.P. who is willing to take the responsibility of her education. Fortunately, we were successful in finding such an individual in Bhopal. The Regional Manager of Action Aid and Bhartiya Gyan Vigyan Parishad together took the responsibility of her rehabilitation.

In the repatriation of Hema, we did not ask for the police escort. There were two reasons for this. Hema was not confident to go with police and letters to her family had remained unanswered. Therefore, the worker accompanied her up to Bhopal. The worker paid a home visit to find out the real situation at her home and to informed her family about her stay in Bhopal.

Home Visit - The village is in a very remote area of Raipur district. There is no transport directly to the village. The secondary school is 5 K.M. away from the village. When we met Hema's family, their response was rather luke-warm, except her grandparents. We observed that there was no stigma as such on her family because of her running away. Her family promised us that they will meet her in Bhopal or write a letter to her and will not stop her education.

The organisation in Bhopal has taken her responsibility for shelter and her further education.

IX. BHARUCH UNIT

The work in Bharuch was started in 1995, at the Bharuch 'A' Division Police Station, as an exploratory study, to understand the role of social worker at police station at the district level.

Now, after five years, the project has expanded from work at police station, to the Female Section in Bharuch Sub-Jail and now, also the Male Section of the prison. The District Superintendent Of Police has also requested our social workers to help in cases coming to the Mahila Atyachar Nivaran Shakha (Women Atrocities' Redressal Branch) of the Police.

As the concept of professional social worker or a social work organisation was very new to Bharuch, initially at was difficult for both the administration and clients to relate to a worker, who was not doing 'seva' and obliging them, but wanted to help them professionally. Now, the referrals come not only from police but from other like women's organisations, lawyers, Reception Center, court staff, community social workers, etc.

Work At 'A' Division Police Station

At the police station, work is directed towards grievance redressal, giving information to clients about community resources, counselling them regarding options, and help them towards rehabilitation.

Observations, at a Small Place:

The major advantage of working in smaller place is that everyone knows you, and you know everyone.

At police station, when the worker is handling a maritual dispute case, there are always many people ready to get involved in the case. The local people usually get married in the same community, thus they have relatives ready to help them. However, lawyers and courts are easily accessible but there is (mis)guidance from lawyers, so they prefer to go the court. Sometimes a client goes from one organisation and person to another for help. Thus, the worker's role is limited to a short period or only limited to giving advice time to time.

The long-term cases are of those clients, who do not belong to Bharuch or have no family support.

Now, after continuous intervention of so many years, the situation has changed. Though we believe that the community should take care of their own problems, in cases of martial conflict, it is the women who is exploited, and vulnerable and requires the help of trained social workers.

Women in Illicit Liquor Trade:

The worker had identified a group of women, who are into illicit liquor trade and work has begun with them. But since the de-linking of the prohibition department from the police department, the access to these women has become difficult. It is not possible for worker to be at the prohibition police station also. It is important to work with these women. They are not only exploited by the liquor lobby owners, but also face problems while getting processed in the system. We have also observed their children getting involved in this trade gradually. When expansion of work in Bharuch is being considered, this area should definitely be kept in the mind.

Over the years Prayas work at the police station has evolved as follows :

1. We help people, who reach the police station in difficult circumstances to make them own decisions, after considering the alternatives.
2. We keep the police officers (field staff and the P.I.) informed about developments in the cases which we are handling, and if necessary, also seek their help, but we maintain confidentiality when clients wishes not to share.
3. We do not help police in investigation.
4. Each police officer reacts and works differently. It is included in the worker's role to find out this difference and get the maximum benefit for the client.
5. A mutually supportive and non-interfering relationship is built with the staff and the senior officer at the police station. They are our colleagues and we respect them for their experience and their understanding of real life.
6. We do not want to work in contradiction with the police, but if there are such cases, we work patiently, with lot of discussion with staff and senior officials.

clients, which in turn has helped to build a positive image of Prayas in the community. For example, for a mentally disturbed released prisoner, we used a Musafirkhana (a resting place for pilgrims) for shelter, and a Gurudwara (place of worship for Sikhs) for his food. In the case of a prisoner arrested in a prohibition case, his old handicapped mother, wife and child had come from Nandurbar (Maharashtra). They had no money for shelter or food. We asked the city police station if they could stay in the premises for the night. They agreed to it and also arranged for food and travel fare for them to Nandurbar.

Work with the District Legal Service Authority:

There is a regular contact and co-ordination with the District Legal Service Authority. Applications for legal aid are usually sent to them through the prison, along with the production warrant of inmates to the court. Whenever we have problems of getting free legal aid advocates, the District Legal Service Authority has been of help.

Aftercare

Very few clients are coming back to us for aftercare services. There are many reasons for it, which are as follows:

1. Our worker is not being able to spend much time in the barracks with clients. Most of his time is spent in providing services such as home visits and court visits.
2. In cases of persons arrested under prohibition related offences, there is a lot of pressure on the worker to pay home visits, contact their families, meet their advocates and write applications for them. These persons, being repeat offenders, keep coming back again and again to the prison and pressurise the worker to provide them with our services.
3. There is no contact centre of Prayas outside prison or the police station. The clients feel scared or hesitant to come back to prison or meet worker at the police station. Sometimes they leave messages which we do not receive on time.
4. As there are few social work organisations in Bharuch to provide community based help, and clients see worker's role limited to provide legal aid services.

The Issue of Permission:

Prayas had permission for entry in Female Section of the prison. Later, we appointed a male worker after a request for the same came from the Superintendent of the prison. The role of the worker was thoroughly discussed with him and work started inside. Simultaneously, permission for his placement was applied for to I.G. Prisons' Office. However, the permission did not come for almost a year. Subsequently, another letter was sent to the I.G. to inquire into the matter. We received a letter from the I. G. Prisons' office refusing the permission, on the grounds of security.

We immediately stopped work in Male Section and decided to take the help of the district officials of Bharuch, who had seen Prayas' work in the field. We approached the Collector, the District Sessions Judge and the Superintendent of Bharuch Sub-jail. They all agreed to support us. The District Sessions Judge raised strong objection to the refusal of permission and communicated the same to the prison officials. We submitted another letter to the I.G. Prisons' Office enumerating our role in prison along with a report of our past year's work. This time, we got the required permission to work in the Male Section. This is an example of the fact that we have been able to demonstrate the need and role of social workers in criminal justice system.

In Conclusion...

The work in Bharuch has grown continuously in these years. We are now considering further expansion in Bharuch. Plans are on to set up an office-cum-contact centre and a workshop-cum-training center for our clients. This requires hiring space and appointing two more workers. Funding support is the main problem. We are planning to approach local people/organisations and hoping to get their support, as we believe that corrections is the responsibility of the community as well.

Case Illustrations:

1) Meeta Patel (name changed) was referred to us by Mahila Kanooni Salah Kendra (MKSK), Bharuch. The need as told by MKSK staff, was that, Meeta Parel's husband was missing and she needed help to register a complaint. The worker called up Meeta Parel and later visited her.

Meeta Patel belongs to Bharuch. She was happly married in Mumbai. She had a daughter who had a kidney problem. During the stock market crash, her husband lost a lot of money and ran away from the house. She along with the daughter stayed with her in-laws for some time. They then asked her to leave as they could not afford her daugher's treatment. She came back to Bharuch and stayed with the parents for some time. After her mother expired, her sister-in-law (bhabhi) did not want her in the house. The father also did not support her.

So she got in touch with a man, a driver, who lived nearby and was sympathetic towards her. He agreed to support her and after some time, they started living together. He helped her a lot during this crisis and even during her daughter's illness and subsequent death. After some time, Meeta got pregnant again through her present husband (she was not legally married to him). Gradually, he stopped giving money at home and conflicts between them began. One day he left the house and abandoned her. The rent of their house was in arrears three months, she pregnant and had no support. She waited for him for some days, searched for him, and finally, not knowing what next to do, went to MKSK. They referred the case to Prayas.

When the worker went to meet Meeta, she asked the worker to help her register a complaint. The worker initiated long discussion with her about what she planned to do if the house owner would ask her to vacate the house, about her delivery, etc. She realised the Meeta had not planned anything.

The worker introduced her to the P.I. She had doubts that her husband is visiting his uncle's (mama's) place. On inquiring, they denied having any knowledge about her husband's whereabouts. The P.I. promised her that he would look into matter during his night rounds.

During later discussions, it was decided that the worker will go to her family and ask them if they would help her during this emergency. If they refused, she could go to Nari Kendra (Reception Centre). The Worker paid a home visit and her family members refused to help in any circumstances.

There were continuous meetings and discussions with her to prepare her for her delivery in the Nari Kendra. Though in theory, any women in crisis can walk into Nari Kendra, this was not the situation in reality. She was sent to the Nari Kendra in the beginning of her eighth month through a the police

memo. They did not receive her saying that they do not have sufficient staff for her delivery.

The worker requested the P.I. of the police station to call up Superintendent of Nari Kendra and then took Meeta to the Kendra along with the police staff. After lot of convincing, they gave her admission.

As she had a ceasarian operation during previous delivery and was severely anemic, she was admitted to the civil hospital. No staff of Nari Kendra was continuously with her. The worker established relationship with the hospital staff and was in continuous touch with the gynaecologist. As her operation date approached closer, it was assessed that she was in need of blood. The worker requested the doctor to give her blood transfusion and promised to make arrangements for replacement of blood.

Meanwhile, worker was also in touch with Meeta's sister in Mumbai (who could not help her because of opposition from her in-laws), Nari Kendra staff and the previous house owner - discussing alternatives to find a place of stay after her delivery.

As the gynaecologist from Bharuch Civil Hospital want to leave, Meeta was transferred to Baroda SSG hospital, where she delivered a baby girl. The worker paid visits there to be with her. She then brought her back to Bharuch Nari Kendra. Meeta stayed there for some time, and later started staying with her mother's friend.

After some days, the worker recieved a call came from her requesting to come and see her urgently. When the worker went to see her, she said that as guest are coming to her aunt's (mother's friend) house, she can not stay there. She requested worker to arrange for shelter and job. The worker contacted various places and finally got job for her in a boarding school for children as a care-taker. She was allowed to stay there with her three-month old baby.

During this phase, a lot of co-ordination was required with the school authorities. She had to manage thirty children and her own child. This created a lot of dynamics among other staff. She worked for almost a year there. She also got alimony from her husband in Mumbai, with the worker's help. Now, she has stopped working in the boarding school, as she had developed some skin infection.

She is managing herself with the alimony and her sister's support. She is not in touch with Prayas any more.

2) Intervention to release an under trial prisoner on parole, on his mother's death:

This is an expample to demonstrate how the social worker, jail authorities and the judiciary together helped an under trial prisoner get released on parole, for death ceremonies of his mother.

4th April – Jailor informed the worker that a inmate's (arrested u/s 302 I.P.C.) mother had expired and he wishes to go for the 'kriya' ceremony. The jailor requested for the social worker's intervention in helping the prisoner get released on parole through court orders. The worker spoke to the inmate, called up his brother and asked him to come with the charge-sheet.

5th April – Brother could not come.

6th April – Brother came with the charge-sheet. He said that the Kriya is on 13th April. He said that their lawyer was not ready to help.

7th April – Contacted a lawyer (who helps Prayas) and asked his advice, after showing him the charge-sheet.

8th April – Saturday

9th April – Sunday

10th April – Lawyer and the worker wrote an application for the inmate.

11th April – Got the signature of the inmate on the application and through the jail authorities, delivered the application personally ('Haath Bida')to Criminal Branch of the Session Court.

The Criminal branch, gave the worker a letter ('Haath Bida') to be given to jail authorities to produce him before the court on 13th of April for the hearing.

13th April – Inmate produced in the court. The worker spoke to the bench clerk to put up the case, as the 'Kriya' was to start at 2.00 p.m. The Judge passed the order to release him on parole for two days with police security. The worker requested the clerk to type the order, copies were made and all procedures were completed before 2.30 p.m.

Unfortunately for the client, his family felt that it was too late as by the time he reaches home, the 'Kriya' would be over.

Highlights of work at Bharuch

Feb, 2000 : Prayas invited to be a member of Core Committee formed on the initiative of the Minister for Jails, Government of Gujarat to discuss problems of under trial prisoners.

13th Mar, 2000 : Invited by Bharuch Police to attend a meeting of Mahila Suraksha Samiti.

15th Mar, 2000 : Attended meeting of the Core Committee and presented the issue of delay in trying cases arrested under section 122 Cr.P.C.

22nd June 2000 : Attended meeting of Core Committee and presented the issue of pending cases in a court due to non-appointment of magistrate and a case of mentally disturbed women.

10th July, 2000 : All the pending cases in that particular court transferred to other courts (as result of presentation before Core Committee)

31st July, 2000 : Inauguration of wireman training course for 25 inmates in Bharuch Sub Jail, in collaboration with Jan Shikshan Santhan.

25th Sept, 2000 : Attended Mahila Suraksha Samiti meeting called by Bharuch Police.

2nd Dec, 2000 : Attended Core Committee meeting.

1st Jan, 2001 : Inauguration of scooter repairing training for 25 male inmates of Bharuch Sub Jail.

4th Jan, 2001 : Letter from I. G. Prisons' Office, Ahmedabad, denying permission to Prayas to work in the Male Section of Bharuch Sub-Jail, due to security reasons.

6th Jan, 2001 : Collector of Bharuch, Shri Swain asked Prayas to start night shelter in Bharuch for women and youth. Proposal for the same submitted to him.

XI. RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Research and documentation has been an on-going process at Prayas. Apart from the annual report, which documents the activities and work of the organisation in some detail, we produce a considerable number of working documents and notes on various issues related to custody, detention and rehabilitation of groups vulnerable to crime or prostitution. These notes are prepared with the help of social workers and training instructors of Prayas, based on their experience in the field. They are prepared to:

- Document the experience of Prayas
- Reflect and review the processes of work from time to time.
- Act as a data base and a guide to future staff
- Produce material from the field for social work training and teaching
- Prepare policy notes for higher authorities in government
- Report on work done for funding agencies

We have also consciously taken up research projects and small studies in areas where we have not yet intervened, in order to intervene in a new area, or to confirm the observations in the field (gathered while working). Last year, we have moved closer to publishing the study conducted by us on the situation of children of prisoners, based on data collected in two Indian cities. The book is nearing completion and should be ready for circulation within two months.

We undertook a study on the situation of women under trial prisoners in Mumbai and Kalyan Prisons, on behalf of the Inter-Departmental Committee, to look at the issue of overcrowding of prisons and suggest ways to reduce it. The report has been submitted to the Chairperson of IDC, with a copy to the I.G. Prisons for further action.

Our study on the rehabilitation of girls released from juvenile institutions is also almost complete. It has tried to look at their rehabilitation needs from the point of view of the released residents. It has suggestions for those running the institutions and policy makers for child welfare. The report should be out by the end of this year.

A small action research study is under way on problems faced by women working in beer bars in Mumbai and ways to rehabilitate them. Twenty

women have been interviewed so far, along with intervention. Data is being collected as intervention is being done.

Analysis of cases in prison, protective home, police station and aftercare was jointly undertaken through staff workshops to find common patterns in the rehabilitation process. The attempt is to work out a basic minimum plan of action for Prayas' clients. This could help document and simplify the rehabilitation process, and bring down differences in workers' approach in problem solving. This process has helped in unravelling categories of clients from the rehabilitation point of view, with specific inputs for each category. The process is yet unfinished, and in the process of being tested.

XII. POLICY LEVEL WORK

As far as initiating policy level changes in the field of criminal justice (with a focus on rehabilitation), the approach of Prayas has been bottom-up. The direction has always been to first work in the field, gather experience and knowledge, and then try to feed that knowledge and experience into policy. This has been done by consulting those who will be directly or indirectly affected by any policy change – social workers in Prayas or in the field, staff of the CJA, NGOs/collateral agencies and clients. Every note prepared has been done after a consultative process. These notes were prepared either at the request of the administration/judiciary or to initiate a process of dialogue with the policy makers in government.

In its July, 2000 meeting of the IDC, Prayas submitted an agenda that included the issue of overcrowding of women's sections of Mumbai and Kalyan Prisons. The issue was discussed in detail in the said meeting and a decision taken to conduct a study on the ground level situation for further discussion. Prayas undertook the said study in September,2000, (as mentioned earlier) and submitted a report to the Committee. The matter will come up for discussion in the next IDC meeting.

Cases of under trial prisoners pending in Mumbai Sessions Courts since 1995, were brought to the notice of the Principal Judge of the City Civil and Sessions Court. The Hon'ble Judge requested Prayas to submit details of such cases before the Registrar for immediate action. We, in turn, requested the prisons department to submit the details and forwarded the same to the Registrar of Sessions Court. All these cases were heard and disposed off forthwith.

The Mumbai IDC was formed at our initiative, chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. The Committee has met thrice since its formation and taken up the issue of rehabilitation of released prisoners. A draft scheme has been circulated on this issue before the Committee for approval. The Committee was apprised by us, about the existence of a loan scheme for released prisoners floated by the Bank of Baroda for Maharashtra and Goa Zone. We are now trying to make the scheme applicable to Mumbai Zone (as it does not fall under Maharashtra and Goa Zone).

A Supreme Court judgement recommending states to enact a legislation on deducting wages of prisoners for compensating victims of crime was brought to our notice by the prisons department. We discussed the issue and came to a conclusion that this amounted to double punishment, as compensating the victim was not lieu of punishment, but apart from the sentence that was awarded to an accused. Also, compensating the victim, after being sentenced, instead of at the time of commission of offence, would amount to delaying the help required for the victim. The issue of victim compensation is far too important to be dealt with an adhoc manner. We communicated our views to the I.G. Prisons' Office, as well as the National Human Rights Commission for further action.

The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women visited the Women's Section of the Mumbai Central Prison and had a discussion with our social workers about problems and issues related to women prisoners, children of prisoners and rehabilitation of released women prisoners. Later, on the same day, we attended a meeting called by the Committee where government departments, NGOs and individuals working in this field were called to discuss issues related to empowerment of women.

In a meeting with the Principal Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Maharashtra (GOM), we we are asked to submit a note on rehabilitation needs to women prisoners, released women prisoners and children of prisoners. This was in connection with the draft policy on women to be brought out by the GoM. We submitted a note with the comments of the I.G. Prisons (for his suggestions).

The issue of temporary shelter for released prisoners has been taken up by with the probation department of the GOM. A note on the need for probation hostels, with some space reserved for needy released prisoners, has been submitted to the DWCD (under whose jurisdiction probation comes). The matter is under their active consideration and we have kept a follow-up with their offcials in this regard.

We have applied for grant-in-aid from the DWCD under a scheme for aid to prisoners, dependants of prisoners, released prisoners and their dependants, issued by the Home Department, GoM. The matter is pending before the Commissioner of DWCD, and we are maintaining follow-up on the matter.

Future Plan:

We plan to actively lobby for a scheme for children of prisoners both inside prisons (accompanying their mothers) and left outside. This group is vulnerable to the welfare community and the policy makers in government. The study conducted on this issue by Prayas will come handy in pursuing the issue with the government and the NGO sector. We have brought this issue up in meetings of the National Initiative for Child Protection (NICP), a scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with Childline India Foundation.

We plan to take the issue of need for social workers in criminal justice forward. This can be done by creating an awareness about the issue among groups working with vulnerable sections (who come in contact with the police/prison/judicial systems), community based organisations and the media.

Similarly, including rehabilitation of vulnerable groups in criminal justice in the syllabi of training institutions of police, prisons, women and child development, probation, judiciary and social work institutes is imperative, if the work of Prayas is to sustain itself. We have released two of our senior workers for this purpose, and hope to make a start in these areas through their work.

XII. STATISTICS

PRISON UNIT

A. MUMBAI CENTRAL PRISON (Male Section)

Total Cases	128
Home Visits	45
Court Visits	34
Police Station Visits	3
Telephone Calls	122
NGOs Visits	7
Hospital Visits	4
Applications for legal matters	7

MUMBAI CENTRAL PRISON (Female Section)

Total Cases	51
Home Visits	26
Court Visits	11
Police Station Visits	6
NGOs Visits	16
Applications for legal matters	7

B. BYCULLA DISTRICT PRISON (Male Section)

Total Cases	86
Home Visits	74
Police Station Visits	3
Telephone Calls	39
Applications for legal matters	3

C. THANE CENTRAL AND KALYAN DISTRICT PRISON

Total Cases	73
Home Visits	187
Court Visits	122
Legal aid	13

II. FAMILY SUPPORT UNIT

Total Cases	14
Home Visits	40
Referral Cases	1
No. of Children in Balwadi (average per month)	10
NGOs Visits	12
Juvenile Welfare Board Visits	3
Sponsorship for Children	1

III. LEGAL AID AND COURT UNIT

Court Visits (Esplanade Court)	120
Court Visits (Session and High Court)	20
Other Metropolitan Magistrate Court	8
NGOs Visits	8
Police Station Visits	4
Mumbai Police Commissioner's Office	2
Inter Department Committee (State/Mumbai)	3
Follow-up visits for IDC	20
Follow-up visits for legal aid project of GLC	6
Prison visits	15
Home visits	8

IV. POLICE STATION UNIT

A. CHEMBUR POLICE STATION

Station House (information/guidance only once)	637
Marital Conflicts	29
Neighbourhood dispute	22
Missing Persons	8
Mentally Disturbed	7
Suicide	2
Minors in delinquency, begging, love affairs, etc	17
Lock-up Cases	46
Home Visits in Short and Long term cases	184
NGOs Visits	43
Meeting with police	1

B. MAHIM POLICE STATION

Station House (information/guidance only once)	31
Marital Conflicts & Family dispute	8
Neighborhood dispute	2
Missing Person	5
Mentally Disturbed	9
Suicide & Burn Cases	1
Minors in delinquency, begging, love affairs, etc	9
Lock-up & Murder Cases	1
Home Visits in Short and Long term cases	148
NGOs Visits & Hospital Visits	43
Meeting with police & Chowki Visits	33

C. C.S.T. RAILWAY POLICE STATION

Total Cases	52
Runaway Cases	36
Accused Cases	4
Prostitution Cases	9
Beggars Cases	2

Missing Person Cases	1
Police Station Visits	24
Home Visits	20
Hospital Visits	11
NGOs Visits	35
Other Visits	7

V. PROSTITUTION UNIT

A. NAGAPADA POLICE STATION

(Counseling and information given to rescued girls/women state-wise)	
Maharashtra	4
Andhra Pradesh	26
Madhya Pradesh	4
West Bangal	13
Nepal	48
Karnataka	14
Cases referred for long-term intervention	
By Police	2
By NGOs	9
By Clients	4

B. PROTECTIVE HOME FOR WOMEN

Case Work and Networking	
Long Term Counseling	44
Hospital Visits	7
Visits for mobilizing resources	30
Family Contacted	9
Home Visits	6
New Cases	191
Activity Classes	
Girls who attended the activity classes	264
Girls completed the training	64
Girls given training kit	85

C. SPECIAL HOME FOR MINOR GIRLS

Girls who attended the activity classes	140
Girls completed the training	108
Girls given training kit	35

VI. AFTERCARE UNIT

a. Case Work	
Total cases	25
New cases	25
Home Visit	87
Institution Visit for shelter	10
Police station visits	7
Court visits	3
Prison visits	10
Treatment and Hospitalisation	3
b. Training for Economic self-reliance	
Training given in workshop	84
Training given outside	6
No. of sales held	3
Visits to NGOs working in red-light area	8
Visits to Training organisations/institutional visits	29

VII. BHARUCH UNIT

A. BHARUCH POLICE STATION

Short term cases	61
Long term cases	9
Cases of women in prostitution	14
Marital and family conflicts	29
Neighborhood dispute	7
Missing person/runaway	5
Cases of minor	16
Home visit	54
Visits to NGOs/hospital/Govt.orgs	50
Meeting with Sr. Police officers	15

B. BHARUCH SUB-JAIL (Female Section)

Total cases	34
Visits to Sub-Jail (Bharuch)	51
Visits to Central Prison (Vadodara)	3
Cases for legal aid	8
Cases of follow up of convicted prisons	5
Home visits	32
Court visits	22
Visits to police station	8
Visits to NGOs	22
Visits to hospital	3
Telephone calls	9
Visits to legal aid office	8
Visits to Govt. agencies	12
Meetings with advocates	13
Meetings with magistrates	7

C. BHARUCH SUB-JAIL (Male Section)

Cases of follow-up of convicted prisoners	5
Work with Under trials	
Home visits	81
Court visits	34
Visits to police station	3
Visits to NGOs	5
Visits to hospital	2
Telephone calls	90
Visits to legal aid office	31
Visits to Govt. agencies	15
Meetings with advocates	16
Meetings with magistrates	7