

DEFINING SUCCESS

The 2008 Chapter

VOLUME I



Many supporters, well-wishers and friends of Prerana often call our work 'successful'. However, what is this success? How do you define it?

At Prerana, we have always found that if our children are able to get out of the red-light area and lead a life of dignity in a safe space – that is our success.

In 2008, a very interesting incident happened which helped us reflect upon our children's and our success. We have been wanting to share it with you for long. It is never too late!

We were at a police station with a 3-year-old from our Night Care Center (NCC) in Kamathipura. His mother was with us. We were there to lodge a complaint against a pimp who had brutally beaten up the child and his mother. Upon seeing the plight of the mother and the child, the police immediately responded. Just as the police started registering a complaint, a young Sub-Inspector (recently posted at this station) started enquiring about our work. After a few initial questions, he asked about our success rate pertaining to the children we work with. Our response was positive.

Another question followed, **"How come no one has still become a doctor or an engineer?"**

The question is no more new to us! When we began our work with the prostituted women and children of Mumbai's red-light areas in the year 1986, we were often asked by experts and laity whether it was "worthy investing" in the education of these children. **"Do their mothers care for them?"** yet another question would unflinchingly follow.

We started enrolling children in formal school system, the mothers were happy and so were the children. As the success story spread, the next question thrust in our direction was, **"How long will you be able to sustain them in the formal educational system?"**

We continued our efforts with a sincere motive. That is all we knew. Through concrete experience we discovered that if appropriate support systems are made available to the mother and the child then the child stays and progresses in the formal educational system.

Having answered the previous question decisively we were asked the next one, **"How many of these**

have completed the 10th standard, an important milestone of the Indian educational system."

We said, "Speaking for the past 10 years, almost all!"

Now that our children had proved themselves, the Pundits remarked, **"Well, 10th has no value these days. Has anyone reached graduation?"**

It was in 2003 when our first child completed her graduation. Since then, the number has been steadily rising. Every year we felicitate these children and, not to forget, their mothers.

There are some well-wishers who support our educational intervention as they place their trust in the power of education and us. They consider that every child deserves an opportunity to get formal education. No questions asked! This is what distinguishes our supporters from the Pundits.

When our children respond to these Pundits with accomplishments, the Pundits further ask **"Whether any of these children can ever become doctors and engineers?"** To this, our supporters respond, "Are these the only indicators of success in life?"

This barrage of insensitive questions never dampens our spirit. With strong will and hope of hundreds of children and their mothers, there is no way we will give up.

Of course, our organization has a heart and we do feel sad sometimes. When it comes to helping the underprivileged, securing their basic rights, the Pundits want guarantee about everything. Do the privileged parents put their children to school only after ensuring that their children will become doctors and engineers? Why do the underprivileged alone have to prove themselves all the time?

What follows below is a brief account of the achievements of our children on the front of formal education against all odds. This would not have been possible without the determination on the part of the children and their mothers, the conviction on the part of Prerana's supporters and donors. After all, it's rightly said, **"It takes a village to raise a child"**.

Below we have attempted to document the academic performances of some of the children who could achieve what they have only because several people trusted / "invested" in, and lent unconditional support to Prerana and the children of the prostituted women. Prerana salutes the members of this "village".

OUR GRADUATES: CHILDREN WHO COMPLETED GRADUATION IN 2008

Ms. JTS: JTS came to us as a 14 year old orphan referred by Childline. Our investigation showed that she was from Latur, a district in the backward Marathwada region of Maharashtra. We referred her to a shelter facility run by a Khedi Vikas Mandal in Latur and followed her case regularly. In June 2003, she passed her 10th standard. and in 2005, her 12th standard. Subsequently, in June 2008, she completed her graduation with 62% marks. Prerana provided her financial assistance to complete her first and second year of Bachelor of Arts (B.A). She is 23 years old now.

Ms. SVJ: SVJ enrolled in Prerana's Night Care Center (NCC) as a 6 year old in June 1993. In August 1993, Prerana helped SVJ's mother with her admissions at Shraddhanand Mahilashram in Mumbai. Two years later, SVJ's mother passed away. Subsequently, SVJ passed her 10th standard in 2003 with 50% and passed both, the 12th standard and 3rd Year Bachelor of Arts, in IInd class. Post graduation, SVJ worked as an assistant lab technician in a laboratory at Mulund and thereafter at a center in Vile Parle in Mumbai. During that time, she resided in a Group Home at Vashi Naka set up and run jointly by Prerana and our children. In 2006, SVJ moved to another Group Home at Dockyard Road, close to South Mumbai. Currently, she lives independently with a few friends in a rented house. In June 2008, she enrolled herself for Masters in Social Work at the S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai. She is 20 years old now.

Ms.TP: TP has been associated with Prerana since 1994. She enrolled in the NCC when she was 8 years old. Prerana helped her mother with the decision to place TP in a shelter facility for long term residential education. As a result, TP and her sister were placed at the Shraddhanand Mahilashram, Mumbai in 1998. TP's mother passed away in November 2002.

In June 2003 TP passed her 10th standard with 53% marks and she cleared her 12th standard in 2005 with 47% marks. She stayed in Shraddhanand Mahilashram for seven years, and left in August 2005 to get married. Currently, TP lives in her own residence in Badlapur, a small town on the outskirts of Mumbai. She works for a company in Bhandup. She continues to look after her younger brother, who is placed in a shelter facility. Her elder sister is married and lives in Dharavi with her husband and has a two-year-old son.

Mr. SS: An orphan from the Kamathipura red light district, SS, was placed by Prerana in Pune's Dagdusheth Halwai Shelter in 1993 for residential education. He was closely followed up by Prerana. SS regularly participated in the activities of Prerana during his vacations.

In 2002, he passed the 10th standard Board exam with 62% marks and then cleared 12th standard with 67% marks. In the year 2007, he secured his Bachelors in Arts degree with 60% marks in the first attempt. In the year 2008, SS successfully completed his Masters in Arts with a second class from Pune University. Later, he secured admission for his Bachelors in Education by clearing his Common Entrance Test (CET) and secured admission in the H.K. College Mumbai in May 2008. He is 22 years old now. Prerana has provided sponsorship for his college education and also for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree.

SS has a younger sister who is 19 years old and stays in Andheri area of Mumbai. Prerana had also helped his sister with her education and subsequently to find a group home facility and a job placement at a petrol pump in Mumbai.

Mr. LV: LV was admitted to Prerana's NCC in June 1992 at the age of 9. He was from the Kamathipura red-light district. He passed the 10th standard in the year 2000 with 39% marks. Subsequently, in 2004, he passed his 12th standard with 71% marks. With Prerana's help he completed his Bachelor of Arts in the year 2007 securing 49.81% marks. Currently, he is pursuing his Masters in Social Work at Jalna in Maharashtra.

Ms. PK: PK was enrolled in the Prerana's NCC in January 1994 when she was 7 years old. In September 1995, she was institutionalized in Snehasadan in Andheri. She passed her 10th standard in April 2003 with 48% marks and her 12th in April 2005 from the SNDT University's Junior college with 54% marks. She went to Hyderabad in August 2005 for a 3 year Nursing course at Mother Vannini College of Nursing, Tadepalligudem, Hyderabad.

OUR CHILDREN WHO PASSED 12TH STANDARD IN 2008



Ms. NSR: NSR is 18 years old and has passed the 10th and 12th standards with 41.6% and 58.67% marks respectively. She was admitted to Prerana's NCC in 1992 when she was only 2 years old. Four years later, she was placed by Prerana at the Shradhanand Mahilashram in Mumbai for long term residential formal education and development. NSR's mother was a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking; she was rescued and rehabilitated by Prerana. For her 12th standard, NSR studied Office Administration, post which she was selected to complete an apprenticeship in 2008 with a reputed company in Vikhroli area of Mumbai.

Ms. TS: TS, who is 19 years of age now, was admitted to Prerana's NCC at the request of her mother in 1991. TS was very young then. Eight years later, Prerana found it absolutely necessary to place her in an external residential institution, away from the red light area, to ensure her safety and progress. Accordingly, she was placed in the St. Catherine's Home in Andheri, Mumbai. Her mother passed away in 2004. In 2006, TS passed her 10th standard exam. In 2008, she passed her 12th standard. Currently, she is working at the St. Catherine's Home on a part-time basis, and hopes to secure admission for a Bachelor degree course in Social Work next year.

Ms. TK: TK was admitted to Prerana's NCC in 1992 when she was two years old. Her mother was a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking. She stayed in a brothel in the Kamathipura red-light district. In the year 1998, Prerana facilitated TK's admission to a shelter facility named Amcha Ghar at Uttan, in Bhayander a place outside Mumbai, where she studied in an English medium school. She passed the 10th standard Boards with 57% marks in 2006, and 2 years later, she cleared her 12th Boards exams securing 67% marks. She was given a residential training in beauty care and is now capable of taking up a job in any beauty parlor. Currently, TK is 19 years old and stays with her mother in Bhayander. She is a First Year student pursuing Bachelor of Commerce degree at a college in Bhayander.

Mr. SA: SA was found during a community outreach visit in Kamathipura red-light area in 1999. A single child, nine years of age, the Prerana team encouraged SA's mother to place him in the NCC. Subsequently in 2001, Prerana helped him secure admission in Snehasadan shelter home in Mumbai for his safety, protection and long term development. In June 2006, he passed his 10th with 75.6% marks and in 2008, he secured 60% marks in the 12th standard. Prerana arranged for his stay at Saathi, and later at the Children's Home in Mankhurd. Since his 10th, Prerana has resumed sponsoring the cost of SA's education, including school supplies and travel. Currently, SA is studying Bachelor of Science in Information Technology at Dahanukar College. As SA is 18 years old now, Prerana is working to secure him an admission in the government after-care hostel.

OUR CHILDREN WHO PASSED 10TH STANDARD IN 2008

Ms. SP: SP has been in care of Prerana since she was 12 years old. As her mother was terminally ill, Prerana helped the mother arrive at a decision to place SP at a shelter facility for her safety, protection and long term. After SP's mother passed away in 2000, Prerana placed her at Snehasadan shelter home in Mumbai. In 2008, she passed the 10th standard exams with 60% marks. As she is skilled at drawing, SP has decided to complete a course in Fine Arts at the Sophia College in Mumbai. Currently, she is 20 years old and continues to stay at Snehasadan.

Ms. MB: MB was enrolled to Prerana's NCC in 1991. Her mother died in the year 1995. MB was subsequently admitted to St. Catherine's Home in the year 1997. A year later, MB's aunt got her out of the institution and forcibly married her off to a man three times her age. MB ran away from this man's house. Through an order from the Child Welfare Committee, Prerana placed her at the Chaitanya Mahila Mandal in Pune in Sept 2003. MB is 19 years old now. Two years ago she was admitted to Snehasadan. She passed her tenth in 2006 securing 61% marks.

Mr. TV: TV was admitted to Prerana's NCC when he was three years old. In March 2003, his mother passed away and TV had to be shifted to a shelter facility. Prerana placed him in the D N Sirur Balakashram Orphanage in Vile Parle. His two sisters had also been placed in a shelter facility by Prerana.

Both his sisters are now married and well settled. He is 15 years of age now. He excels in drawing and acting and has taken admission in the Pathak College in Santa Cruz Mumbai for Minimum Competency Vocational Courses (**MCVC**) in Tourism.

Mr. PS: PS was admitted to Prerana's NCC in 1999. Subsequently in 2006, he was placed in a shelter facility named D N Sirur Balakashram Orphanage. PS is now 14 years old and has passed 10th standard with 38% marks.

Mr. GR: GR was enrolled in Prerana's NCC in 1997. His mother was a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in the red-light area of Kamathipura. As per his mother's wish, Prerana shifted GR to BJ Home for children in December 1999. GR lost his mother in June 2003. Currently, GR is pursuing a two year ITI diploma course. He is placed in Bal Kalyan Nagri shelter facility run by the Children's Aid Society. GR has two younger sisters, one of whom is studying in the 8th standard and the second one is in the 3rd standard. Both of them are currently the residents of Prerana's Naunihal shelter facility in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

Mr. VLS: VLS passed 10th standard through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) with 58%. VLS joined Prerana's Falkland Road NCC in 1998 at the age of 14. In 2000 he was placed at Snehasadan

shelter home. He stayed at Snehasadan only for two months as he regularly bunked classes to see his mother. Hence, he was brought back to the Falkland Road NCC. Currently, he is enrolled in the R.M. Bhat Night School for further studies with sponsorship from Prerana. In 2003, he shifted to Kamathipura and was enrolled in the Bombay Central High School, where he continued his studies until 2004. He could not pass his 10th Boards exam. In 2005, he was placed at OASIS, a shelter facility, where he completed a year long tailoring course from OASIS with Prerana's help, and subsequently worked with OASIS as a tailor for one year. He hopes to complete a fashion design course in future.

After two attempts he cleared his 10th Standard. Boards exam in 2008. His younger sister stays in Prerana's Naunihal shelter facility developed for girls in need of care and protection. She is mentally challenged and attends a special school.

Mr. GLP: GLP was enrolled in the first standard of Kamathipura Municipal School by Prerana in 1997. He started attending Prerana's NCC in June 2003 when he was 13 years old. With Prerana's support, GLP moved to a shelter home in Ahmednagar. He passed his 10th standard in June 2008 with 56.05% marks. He has now secured admission in Arts in Maha Ganapati Samajseveka college in Wadner.



"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school. The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."