



**EXPLOITATION TO
EMPOWERMENT**

Vulnerability of Girls & Women in India

Every year, millions of women and girls in India experience some form of physical or psychological violence and discrimination - with dramatic impact on their physical/mental health and human capital.

Deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, gender discrimination, poverty and family neglect, leave girls and women vulnerable at every age, and stage, of their life - from the moment they are born.

This vulnerability is at the heart of various forms of gender based violence, including trafficking and sexual exploitation, in India.

And while many organisations attempt to rescue and rehabilitate these women, successful reintegration is low, due to gaps in current rehabilitation strategies - leaving the rescued victims at a high risk of re-victimisation and re-trafficking.



Patriarchy

From birth, oppressive patriarchy and gender discrimination results in subordination, leaving women and girls vulnerable to abuse, violence, trafficking and exploitation.



Poverty

Poverty further aggravates a woman's vulnerability, as the burden of it weighs down heavier on girls and women in India than it does on men.

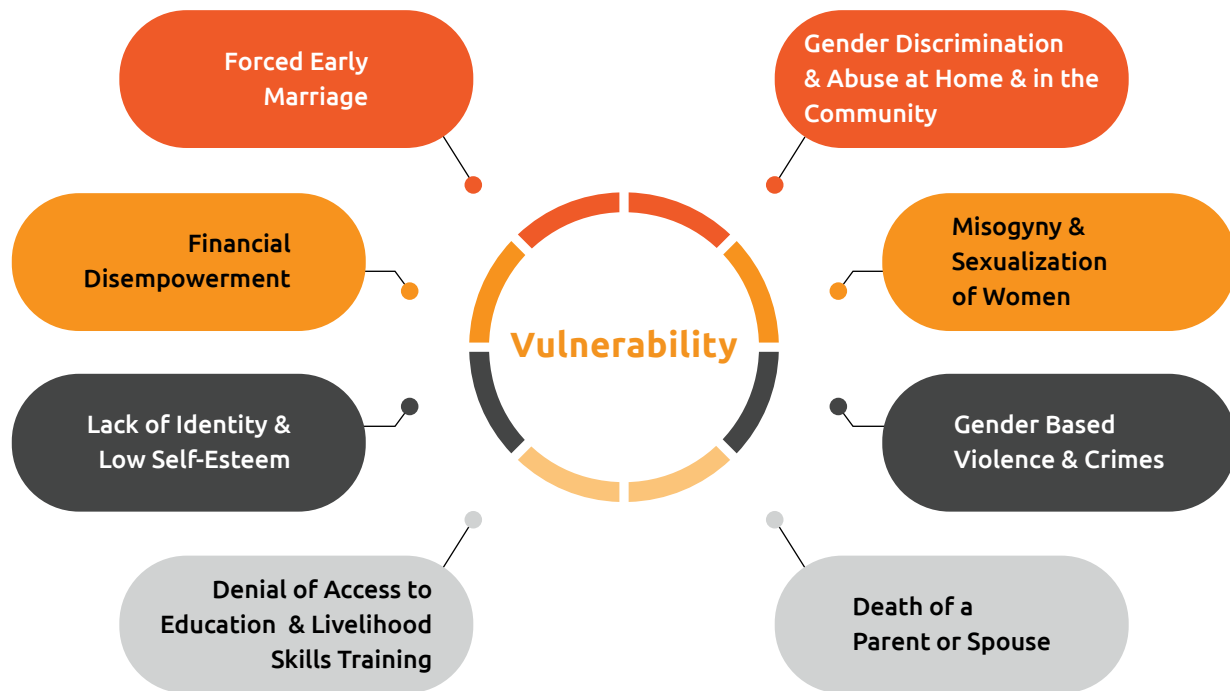


Neglect

Family is the single most important influence in a child's life - but in India, families can be unsafe places for young girls. There are many risks, violations and vulnerabilities girls face within the family environment, just because they are girls. At an age when, young girls should be growing and learning in a normal environment, they are exposed to brutalities that irreversibly alter their childhood.

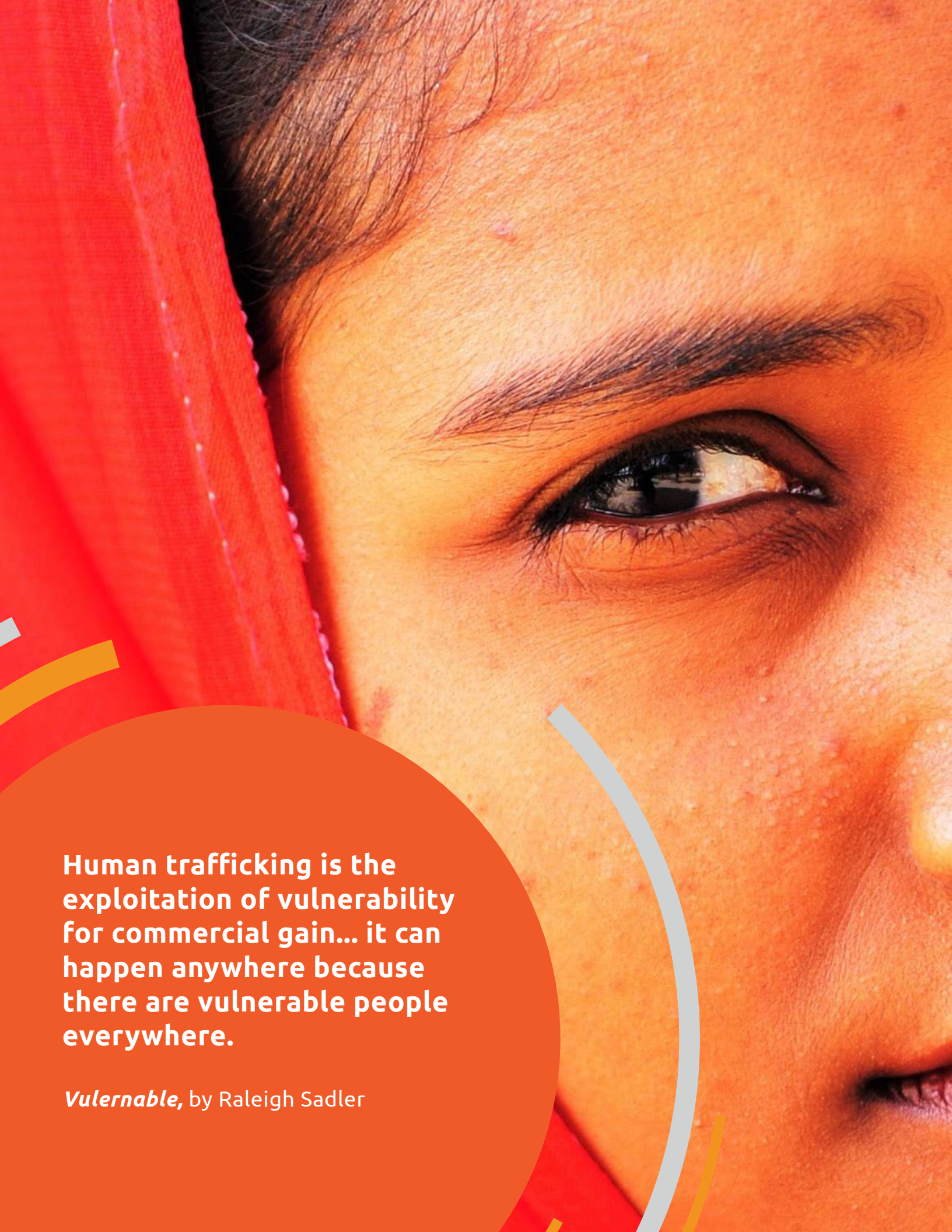


Causes & Consequences of Vulnerability



Vulnerability presents itself in many shapes and forms – the loss of a parent or spouse, financial disempowerment, denial of education - but the impact is often the same. Due to the conditions of vulnerability, young girls and women from low income households often find themselves in difficult circumstances such as:

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- Running away from home
 - Commercial & Sexual Exploitation
 - Abduction
 - Trafficking
 - Abandonment & Desertion by the Family
 - Rape & Sexual Assault

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, partially covered by a red veil. The image is overlaid with graphic elements: a large orange circle on the left, a white curved line on the right, and a yellow curved line at the bottom. The text is positioned within the orange circle.

Human trafficking is the exploitation of vulnerability for commercial gain... it can happen anywhere because there are vulnerable people everywhere.

Vulnerable, by Raleigh Sadler

Trafficking. Rescue. Institutionalisation.

The trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation remains a significant issue in India - denying millions of women and girls their basic rights to liberty and education, and causing serious health problems.*

Recognised as a serious issue in India, the Government and civil society are working to combat trafficking – with a focus on rescue and prosecution.

Rescue operations of trafficked young girls and women are conducted frequently by the police and various NGOs. After being rescued, victims are transferred to institutions such as government-run and/or private shelter homes.

And so begins another phase in their life of being trapped, helpless and alone - in an institution.

16
Million

Women are victims of sex trafficking in India a year, while 40% of them are adolescents & children.*

The trafficking of young girls (under the age of 18) has grown

14
times

over the last decade according to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).

Maharashtra is the hub of trafficking and has the highest number of cases in the country

15%

25%

Of all cases in Maharashtra registered in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane areas alone.



Gaps in Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Women

Successful reintegration of trafficked women occurs in abysmally low numbers, due to systemic gaps and a faulty approach to rehabilitation.

Most rehabilitation strategies adopt a 'one size fits all' approach, rather than creating more personalized programs to suit the specific needs and circumstances of individual victims.

The result is that rescued victims are vulnerable to re-victimisation and re-trafficking. And a vicious cycle begins.

Challenges & Gaps in Current Reintegration Practices:

- 1 Very few organisations work towards reintegrating victims
- 2 Current strategies are heavily dependent on institutional rehabilitation
- 3 Victims face multiple challenges in shelter homes, and discrimination
- 4 Victims lack core life skills to cope with reintegration into society
- 5 There is inadequate long-term planning for rehabilitation
- 6 A lack of transitional group homes or halfway homes
- 7 'Return to Family' is often a key goal of rehabilitation
- 8 Lack of appropriate trauma counselling
- 9 Lack of vocational skills & livelihood opportunities
- 10 Marriage as a rehabilitation strategy

The Vicious Cycle of Re-exploitation

There is an urgent need to break this cycle and prevent the institutionalisation and subsequent re-exploitation of women.





Kshamata

Kshamata was formed in 2013 to fill these gaps in rehabilitation, and break the cycle of exploitation.

We work with women who are vulnerable, trafficked, and victims of domestic violence - engaging them, equipping them with vocational skills, and handholding them into livelihoods.

We empower them with life skills and support them to transition from institutions into group stay homes and finally, independent living.

To date we have supported over 2000 women, and have completely transformed the lives of 201 women by successfully reintegrating them back into society.

Vision

The cycle of exploitation is broken for vulnerable women – they lead a life of dignity, confidence and freedom.

Mission

Kshamata reintegrates women in vulnerable circumstances back into society - equipping them with skills for life and livelihood; empowering them to live independently; and supporting them to build a new life.

"In 2008, I was working with an international organisation that worked on rescuing and rehabilitating trafficked girls and women. Whilst conducting these rescue operations, I realised that I was seeing the same girls again and again - it bothered me to see that. Why was that happening? Clearly we were doing something wrong if we were not breaking the cycle?

I also saw that the rate of integration back into society was dismal, because there was no end goal in mind, before rescue. The futility of making a girl go through the trauma of rescue, and then not doing justice to the rescue, bothered me immensely. Infact, allowing the girl to fall back into the trap and lose trust in the system, was perhaps an even bigger crime.

A seminal moment for me, was when a girl pleaded with me to help her leave the brothel. That girl was Rehana ... and her words haunted me for months, till I was able to find a way to get her out safely and in utmost confidentiality.

But once she out, there was an entire personal journey I had to go through with her - getting her alternative work and helping re-build her life around it. Rehana went through her own ups and downs and it was through her emotional journey that I learnt what it meant to rehabilitate and integrate a trafficked victim back into society. And so Kshamata was born."

Bharathy Tahiliani

Kshamata Founder



An Approach That Works ...

To successfully reintegrate a victim of trafficking or exploitation back into society - creating a new life and a stable future - a reintegration program must address ALL the domains of aftercare.

The **9 Dimensions of Reintegration** serves as Kshamata's framework for planning rehabilitative support, training and services for young girls and women transitioning out of institutional care.

Harnessing this approach, Kshamata takes women and girls on a journey, handholding them every step of the way, from brothels, shelter homes and institutions, towards independent living and empowerment - as they heal, etc., rebuild their lives and finally, break free.

Kshamata's 9 Dimensions of Reintegration



Kshamata's Programs

To help women 'break free' from the cycle of exploitation, Kshamata drives the following programs:

1. Reintegration Program



2. Kshamata Unlimited

– a social enterprise



3. Advocacy & Engagement with Government





1. Reintegration Program

The reintegration of trafficking victims is a difficult, complex, and long-term process - unique to each survivor. Reintegration planning involves not only the survivor, but also considers the environment and community within which the reintegration takes place. The program features four key phases:

Engage

A

Equip

B

Empower

C

Evolve

D

Kshamata develops an individualised reintegration plan, using the internationally recognised Case Management approach, developed by John Fredrick, UNICEF consultant. The reintegration plan is implemented by a multidisciplinary team consisting of social workers, counsellors, trainers, mentors and project coordinators.

Bharathy Tahlilani, Kshamata's Founder, is one of only two people in India trained by UNICEF to use the Case Management approach for Trafficking Victims in Shelter Homes. She is also a recognized Master Trainer on the Case Management approach.

A. Engage (upto 6 months)

The Engage Program aims to build rapport, and trustworthy relationships with survivors, and assess their needs for rehabilitation.

By working with women in Government and NGO run shelter homes and brothel areas, Kshamata equips survivors with basic skills and prepares them for life on the outside.

- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Assessments
- ✓ Periodic Health Camps
- ✓ Life Skills
- ✓ Training in Tailoring
- ✓ Income Generation Opportunities
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Cultural & Recreational Activities





B. Equip (6-18 months)

Kshamata works with survivors, both in brothel communities and in the Kshamata Transformation Centre, to impart skills, education and information. These women choose their vocation and are then placed in training institutes for formal courses - helping them enhance their employability and reducing their vulnerability.

In a supported environment, women are given all the skills and services needed to commence healing, and prepare to stand on their own two feet in life.

- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Life Skills (core & advanced)
- ✓ Healthcare
- ✓ Independent Living Skills
- ✓ Social Entitlements
- ✓ Imparting 21st Century Skills
- ✓ Trauma Counselling
- ✓ Education and Leadership
- ✓ Vocational Training
- ✓ Work Readiness & Job Placements
- ✓ Exposure Visits
- ✓ Recreation Hobbies & Cultural Activities

C. Empower (18-24 months)

Kshamata facilitates small groups of women to live together in group stay homes to enable them to lead an independent life, with the support of one another - providing an extended 'family' and critical emotional support, stability and security.

The group home concept, one of the most important elements of Kshamata's reintegration program, allows the women to learn the critical steps in transitioning towards living independently.

Once the young women have been placed in a livelihood and have financial independence, they subsequently transition into independent accommodation - be it in a hostel or a house sharing situation.

- ✓ Group Living Skills
- ✓ Household Management
- ✓ Re-Socialisation
- ✓ Saving & Investments
- ✓ Psycho-Social Care & Mentoring
- ✓ Livelihood Support & Followup
- ✓ Mutual Support Groups





D. Evolve (24 months onwards)

Kshamata supports the evolution of women to become self reliant and lead an independent life with dignity.

By providing regular support to women in independent living arrangements, Kshamata provides the necessary 'safety net' for women to ensure they do not fall back into vulnerability.

- ✓ Tracking & Check-ins
- ✓ Support Group

- ✓ Providing Crisis Support
- ✓ Mentoring



2. Kshamata Unlimited

Kshamata Unlimited is a social enterprise that provides sheltered employment opportunities to the young women who transition through Kshamata's Reintegration program.

Harnessing the tailoring and jewelry making skills they have learned along the way, the women create a decentralized production unit that creates a variety of products, which are marketed and sold by Kshamata.

The enterprise helps women generate livelihoods that support their reintegration and empowerment and creates an enabling environment to empower survivors - helping them to grow, generate respect, and become productive and earning citizens.



3. Advocacy & Engagement With Government

Engagement with Government

Kshamata works directly with survivors of violence and trafficking through State Government run shelter homes in Mumbai and Thane districts of Maharashtra state. Whilst shelter homes provide necessary arrangements for their safety and rehabilitation, NGOs provide support services like counselling, skill development training, job readiness, placement and post release handholding.

Kshamata also collaborates with the Thane and Mumbai Child Welfare Committees (CWC) and takes referrals for young women who have completed 18 years of age for their further rehabilitation and reintegration.

Court Intervention

Under the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, Kshamata works hand in hand with women to handle the complete court process, including statement preparation, investigation, follow up and implementation of court orders and CWC orders for rehabilitation of both major and minor victims in Thane District. Kshamata is directly engaged with the judiciary through home investigations, victim statements and repatriation/ restoration process.

Why court intervention?

The process gives us an opportunity to interact with women, assess their needs and equip them with skills for alternate livelihood if they are detained for over three months. It also helps us plan their career path planning and decide on their placement at the Kshamata Transformation Centre if they are very young and do not want to go back to their families.

377

Victim statements taken

183

Home investigations done (HIR)

134

Orders received for survivors' rehabilitation by the courts

Advocacy

Advocacy is the process of gaining widespread support for a particular cause or policy. Kshamata believes in the rights based approach and hence, actively participates in, and supports the following organisations and movements:



National Alliance in India for Covid 19 Response on Aftercare (NAICRA)



Violence Against Women



NGO Network for Rehabilitation of Trafficking Survivors



Mumbai Ration Kruti Samiti

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black lace dress, is standing in a circular frame. She is looking down and smiling. The background is dark and textured. The frame is set against an orange background with white and red curved lines.

Naina's story
featured in
**'Femina
Magazine'**

Naina's Incredible Journey

"When I was ten, my parents died and my brother and sister were taken away from me. I was sent to live with my aunt.

It wasn't so bad at first. I wasn't sent to school like my aunt's children, and started doing the housework. But after my 14th birthday, my aunt started pushing me to attend to her customers – it seems she was into prostitution. It was a nightmare, but I was trapped and had no choice but to comply.

One day, the police caught me on the street with a customer and took me to a shelter home, but they just sent me back to my aunt. Back to the horror.

But having left once, I knew I could do it again, so I decided to run away – reaching out to the superintendent of the Shelter Home who assured me a safe escape. I arrived at the home and found a Kshamata social worker waiting to take me to its Transformation Center.

And so this is how I started my new life. At Kshamata I learnt so many things – how to heal, how to stand up for myself, how to be confident. I learnt tailoring, jewellery making and baking skills too, and soon found a job in a catering unit, handling the counter.

Initially, I was given a salary of INR 10,000. But I was passionate and worked hard, so soon got a salary increment of INR 3000 and was promoted as Supervisor of the entire team.

Life has never been the same since."

- Naina

Impact



2000+

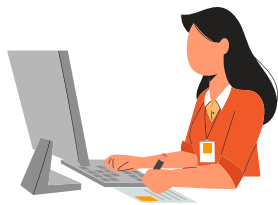
Women Engaged

Through life skills, counselling, literacy, health care, dance movement therapy, art & craft activities, among others.



1000+

Women skilled for livelihood



197

Placed in jobs



126

Women enrolled in the Kshamata Training Center



63%

Women living independently



4

Women started their own enterprise

Why Kshamata?

Differentiators

- Kshamata provides a unique program approach based on the 9 Dimensions of Reintegration, using the Case Management approach.
- Program activities address all aspects related to the complete reintegration of survivors - plugging the critical gaps in current solutions and practices.
- Participation of the members of society in the lives of the women and girls in various forms (coaching, care giving, educational sessions, mentoring, recreational activities) is a unique factor to this process. Members of society contribute to the solution and women create society linkages early on in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Bharathy Tahiliani, our Founder, is one of only two people in India trained by UNICEF to use the Case Management approach for 'Trafficking Victims in Shelter Homes'. She is also a recognized Master Trainer on the Case Management approach.
- Bharathy also has vast experience and expertise in Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, with reputed international organisations.
- Kshamata Unlimited is a unique social enterprise and livelihood opportunity for survivors.

Aligning with Sustainable Development Goals

Our work contributes towards achieving targets under 4 key sustainable development goals for Women:



Kshamata also aligns with National objectives in this area, and currently implements various government policies and programs.





Vision 2025

We have a grand vision for the future and the need is vast. We are on a mission to:

- Engage 3000 women to create employability skills
- Equip 1200 of these women for livelihoods through job placements, income generation opportunities and entrepreneurship support
- Empower 500 women to live independently and integrate back into society
- Create employment and income generation opportunities for 300 women via Kshamata Unlimited
- Set up a consortium of NGOs in Thane and develop state level relations with the relevant state departments
- Become a resource organization for the sector and provide knowledge and training to other organisations working with vulnerable women
- Attain certification and disseminate our Reintegration Model to other organisations in the sector through collaborations and partnerships



How You Can Help

Violence against women and trafficking are prevalent in India, and are proof of the inequalities that women and girls face. Further, commercial trafficking remains one of the worst crimes, born out of the vulnerability of women.

The limited gains in gender equality and women's rights made over the past decade are also in danger of being rolled back thanks to COVID19. Additionally, the pandemic has also led to a steep increase in violence against women and girls—during the lockdown where many women were trapped at home with their abusers, struggling to access services that are suffering from cuts and restrictions.

The UN Secretary-General is urging governments to put women and girls at the centre of their recovery efforts.

“Women are not only the hardest hit by this pandemic, they are also the backbone of recovery in communities. Putting women and girls at the centre of economies will fundamentally drive better and more sustainable development outcomes for all, support a more rapid recovery, and place the world back on a footing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”.

We believe that, given the right support, services, and opportunities for development, victims of exploitation, violence and abuse can move forward to build independent, fulfilling lives, and stable futures.

There is a role that **YOU** can play too.

You can support our mission by providing:

Grants



Program Support

Engage: Outreach in Shelter Homes & Vulnerable Communities

Equip: Kshamata Transformation Centre & Community programs

Empower: Group Stay Units

Kshamata Unlimited: Working Capital Support



Financial Sustainability

Building a corpus:
Kshamata NGO

Kshamata Unlimited:
Capital

Dedicated Space for Centre in Thane

- Expansion of Kshamata Centre
- Expansion of Kshamata Unlimited Production



Organisational Capacity Building

- Strengthening M&E systems
- System set up for Data Capture, Analysis & MIS
- Knowledge Products & Certification
- External Trainings for Staff on IT, Remote Learning & Program delivery





Individual Sponsorships

- Support a Woman for 1, 6 or 12 months
- Vocational Training Annual Support



Sponsorships of Events & Recreational Activities

- Antarang - Inter Home Art Competition
- Exposure visits
- Birthday Celebrations



In-kind Support for Kshamata Programs

- Laptops, Smartphones, CCTV
- Sewing Machines, Jewellery Making Tools
- Monthly Groceries & Toiletries
- Furnishings & Kitchen Equipment
- Stationary



In-kind Support to Set Up Group Homes

- Furniture
- Furnishings
- Home Appliances



Volunteering Support

- Yoga, Meditation
- Art & Dance Therapy
- Health & Nutrition
- Remedial Study / Coaching Sessions



Support for Research Studies

- To study the Qualitative Impacts of the Reintegration Process

Buy Kshamata Unlimited Products:

Reach out to response@kshamata.org for the Product Catalogue





KSHAMATA

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