

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, blue and white striped fabric piece. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame. In the foreground, several other colorful fabric pieces are scattered on a wooden surface. The background is blurred, showing a wooden shelf with various items, including a red heart-shaped object and a green plant. The overall scene suggests a craft or textile-making process.

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024

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FROM THE DESK OF FOUNDER

Dear Friends, Supporters and Partners

It is with immense pride and profound gratitude that I present to you the annual report of Kshamata for the year 2023-2024. Over the past year, our dedicated team has tirelessly worked to transform the lives of women and adolescent girls who have faced vulnerabilities, exploitation, and gender-based violence, including the harrowing reality of trafficking.

We believe in an integrative approach to reintegration, one that carefully addresses the distinct needs of each individual we serve. Our support system is built on several pillars: ongoing care and counselling, life skills education, and job readiness and work preparedness training. These foundational elements are complemented by vocational training and diverse livelihood options, ensuring that these women and girls are not only skilled but also empowered to seize the opportunities before them. Our commitment extends beyond immediate assistance—we continue to follow up and support their journey towards full societal reintegration.

As we reflect on the achievements of this past year, we are inspired by the remarkable stories of transformation we have witnessed. We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, partners, volunteers, and well-wishers. Thank you for your belief in the cause and the work Kshamata does. It motivates us to work resolutely toward achieving our vision and strive towards creating a meaningful and lasting impact in the lives of the women we serve.

Last year, we made significant strides in strengthening and deepening our programs, ensuring that dedicated teams were both allocated and developed within these initiatives. We focused on enhancing the quality and reach of our initiatives, ensuring that they effectively addressed the needs of the communities we serve.

It was a year of pushing our boundaries further in our commitment to the cause, and in the process, we established deeper organizational values. This year we challenged ourselves to think bigger, and explore new ways to fulfil our mission. In doing so, we strengthened our commitment to the cause, embracing new challenges with resilience and determination.

It is key to explicitly state here that together, we are making a difference, breaking the cycle of exploitation, and building a future where women and girls, faced with several hardships and disadvantages, can live with dignity, confidence, and freedom.

With much gratitude and hope,

Bharathy Tahiliani
Founder & Managing Trustee
Kshamata



About Kshamata...!

Kshamata seeks to deinstitutionalize victims of trafficking by providing appropriate, need based services to facilitate their transition from State- and NGO-sponsored aftercare homes to greater personal autonomy.

The organization strives to proactively restore and support the link between survivors and their aspirations, working to reconcile gaps and strengthen services that facilitate the integration of vulnerable women and girls. Recognizing these women as a highly vulnerable group, Kshamata is committed to preventing them from being trafficked and revictimized.

Kshamata remains committed to its vision and mission, continually adapting its strategies to better serve the needs of women and girls affected by trafficking and exploitation. Through sustained efforts and community engagement, Kshamata endeavours to create a safer, more inclusive society where every woman and girl can thrive.

Our approach involves understanding the unique needs and circumstances of each survivor and tailoring our interventions accordingly. By focusing on empowerment and restoration, we aim to provide survivors with the confidence and skills necessary to rebuild their lives and achieve economic independence.



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.

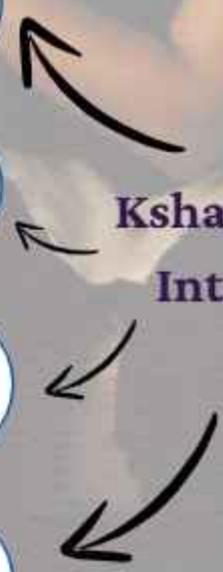
RESIDENTIAL INTENSIVE CARE PROGRAM

CO-LIVING UNITS

OUTREACH PROGRAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

Kshamata's Core Interventions



OUR INTERVENTIONS

Residential Intensive Care Program



These interventions are implemented through the Kshamata Transformation Centre (KTC), a residential training centre that demonstrates the process of deinstitutionalization. At KTC, women aged 18 to 26 get enrolled & have the opportunity to educate themselves through life skills and vocational training sessions, as well as counselling that supports their individual sustainability.

Additionally, they develop essential qualities such as punctuality, respect, commitment, and quality work through job readiness sessions, empowering them to embrace independence with confidence. All the women sent to KTC by various government-run shelter homes, overseen by the Department of Women and Child Development of Maharashtra, upon their release.

The centre offers a range of interventions, including training in Fire Safety, Culinary, Diagnostic, tailoring and embroidery, catering, and beautician courses. Additionally, it provides job preparation skills such as spoken English, computer literacy, functional literacy, and life skills education. Some selected girls/women also receive support to continue their education at the school and college levels.



Impact



**Total Reach
(excluding
overlaps) -
Universe
792**

Outreach (Community+Shelter Home Impact)

No of Homes	07
No of Communities	04
Life Skills + Literacy	792
Vocational Training	450
Income Generation	139
External Employment	86
External Employment + Independent Living	48
Micro Business	75



Impact



**Total Reach
in 2023-24**
851

Kshamata Transformation Program

New admission for residential care	34
New admission for day care	13
Life Skills + Literacy Program	59
Vocational Training	45
Income Generation	22
Employee Job Placement	31
Independent Living	25
Drop out	03



Co-living Units



This is the final stage program result which brings together all the efforts. Leading to complete empowerment through financial independence and self-reliance. This stage also involves building social support networks and helping women become part of mainstream society. This transition to independent living only possible through unique group stay model of which has been very successful since it started seven years ago.

Outreach Program

Kshamata's outreach program is designed to extend support to various government and non- government shelter homes. The program begins with an assessment of the conditions and needs of the girls and women residing in these homes. Based on this assessment, Kshamata provides counselling sessions and educates them about alternative livelihood opportunities. The program also offers career guidance to help them explore potential career paths. Additionally, where feasible, the program initiates income-generating activities to facilitate the transition to self-sufficiency.



Social Enterprise Initiative



At Kshamata, the 'Earn and Learn' initiative empowers women through practical skills and professional development. Our in-house social enterprise (Kshamata Unlimited) produces tailored clothing and handmade jewelry, offering hands-on experience in a real work environment. Beyond technical training, the program instills essential qualities like work ethic, discipline, communication, and punctuality. This prepares women for both independent living and excel in broader professional environments

CORE APPROACHES & ACTIVITIES



Skills Development

Offering vocational training programs tailored to the interests and aptitudes of the women and girls to enhance their employability in various sectors. By equipping them with marketable skills, we enable them to secure stable employment and achieve financial independence.

Life Skills Education

Equipping survivors with essential life skills, including communication, decision-making, and problem-solving, to help them navigate daily challenges and build confidence. This training is crucial for their personal development and social integration.

Basic & Financial Literacy

Providing education on financial management, budgeting, and savings to ensure that survivors can achieve economic independence and stability. Understanding financial principles is key to breaking the cycle of poverty and exploitation.

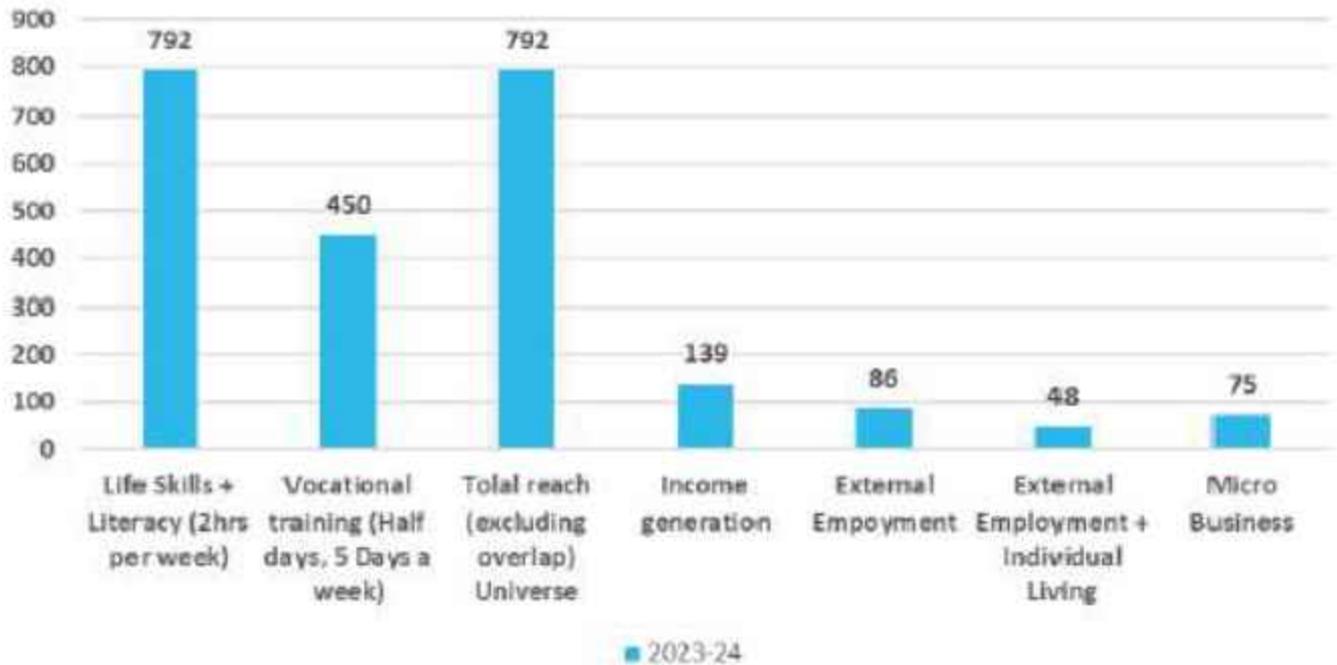
Work Preparedness & Job Placement

Assisting women and girls in preparing for the job market through resume building, interview preparation, and connecting them with potential employers. This support is vital for their transition to self-sufficiency and economic empowerment.

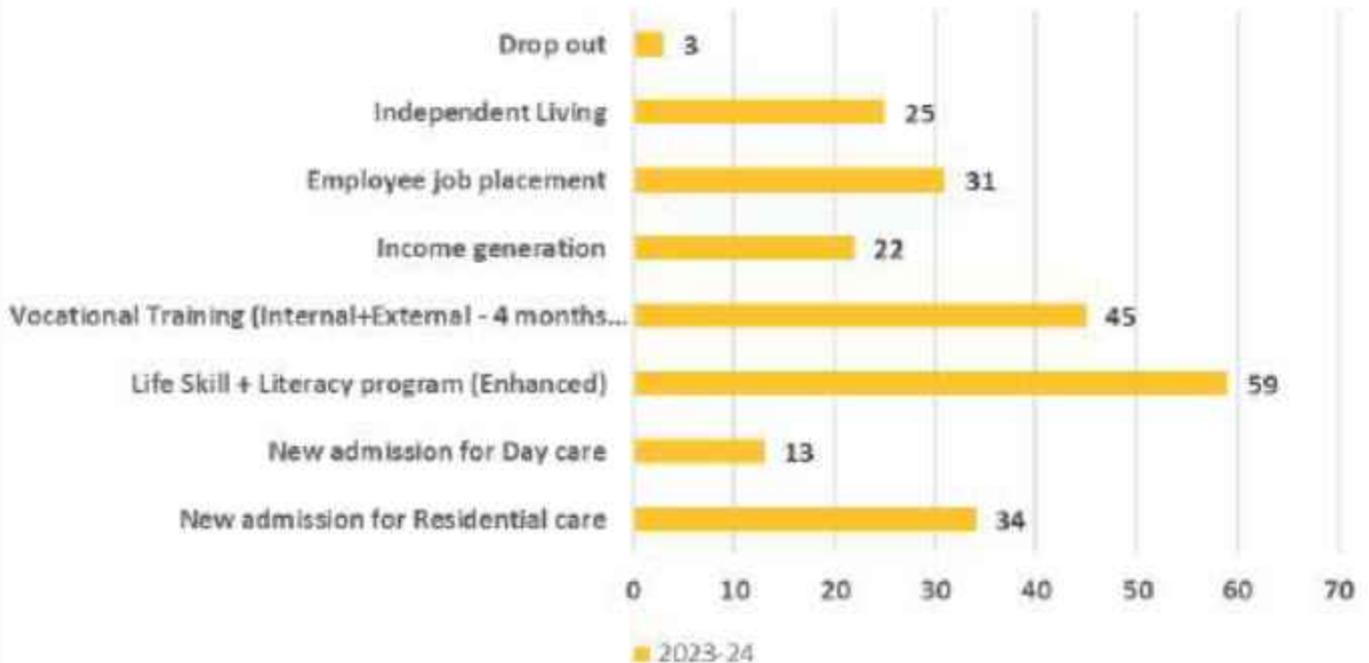
Healthcare & Nutrition

Ensuring access to medical care, including mental health services, to address both physical and psychological needs of the survivors. Also we conducted sessions on nutrition, where we educate the girls about the essential role that a balanced diet plays in supporting both their mental and physical well-being.

Outreach (Community + Shelter home impact)



KTC Impact



Milestone!



Bhiwandi Community Centre Opening Ceremony

This year marked a significant milestone for Kshamata with the opening of the Bhiwandi Skill Development Centre, a pivotal initiative dedicated to providing women engage in sex trade the opportunity to break free from the cycle of exploitation.

The center offers comprehensive training in various micro-businesses, such as tailoring and other vocational skills, enabling these women to either start their own businesses or secure employment in the service industry.

Through these programs, we aim to equip them with the skills needed for long-term financial independence. However, our mission goes far beyond just economic empowerment.

At the heart of our efforts is the goal of restoring dignity, self-worth, and

confidence to women who have faced severe challenges and exploitation. The Bhiwandi Centre is a safe space where these women can rediscover their potential, build new livelihoods, and reclaim their futures.

By providing continuous support and resources, we are helping them transition towards a life of self-reliance and renewed hope, ensuring that they are not only economically empowered but also emotionally and socially reintegrated into society.

This center represents a significant step forward in our ongoing mission to transform lives and create lasting change for women affected by trafficking and exploitation.



Interventions in Government Shelter home



• Basic & Financial Literacy

Providing basic literacy and financial skills training for women in government shelter homes is a crucial intervention to equip them with essential skills for their future. The intervention demonstrated a significant impact in empowering women in government shelter homes. Key components of the intervention included basic literacy classes focusing on reading, writing, and comprehension, as well as financial literacy sessions covering budgeting, saving, banking, and investment. Till March, 278 women & girls actively participated and learnt basic literacy and finance management skills.

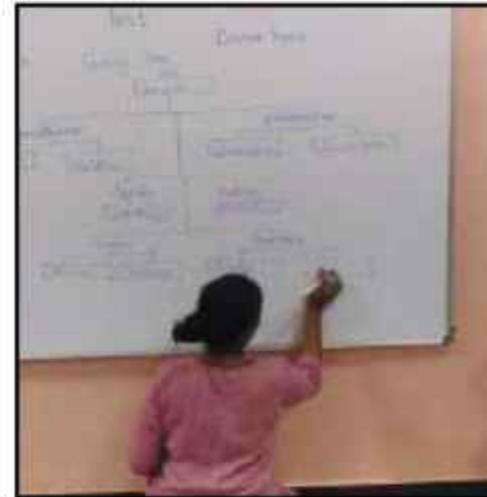
The classes at all three shelter homes are progressing well, with an average of 45-50 women attending regularly. Group assignments were given to foster a sense of support among them, which has proven effective. Pre-assessments were conducted for all enrolled women, providing a baseline to gauge their learning needs and current levels.

Teachers assess the women monthly to monitor their progress, and data on their performance is shared with them to encourage improvement. Individual updates on progress were shared with the shelter home superintendent during case management meetings attended by other NGOs.

A total of 204 women learnt basic and financial literacy skills. There is a significant improvement in basic literacy skills among women with over 80% showing enhanced reading, writing abilities and improved comprehension skills.

Women who have released from shelter homes shared that they started applying literacy and financial skills in their daily lives, including managing household expenses, accessing banking services, etc. Likewise, women who started small-scale business units are leveraging their financial literacy to generate income.

Financial literacy sessions were conducted to enhance their understanding of budgeting, savings, investment, and financial planning, thereby fostering financial independence.



Nandini, who is speech-impaired, has always struggled to express herself. When she arrived at Shantisadan in 2019, she found it challenging to communicate. Through the dedicated literacy classes provided by Kshamata, she gained confidence. Starting with basic alphabets, she has learned to write and now, though she cannot speak, she can beautifully express herself through writing.



• Health Care

Women survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence experience trauma and require specialised support services, including counselling and mental health care, to heal their trauma and facilitate their recovery process. The healthcare interventions have positively impacted over 400 women/girls lives during their detention in the shelter homes over the last eighteen months.

Counselling sessions and therapies were provided to over 300 women/girls to address the psychological and emotional well-being. Professional counsellor and therapists offered support and guidance, helping the women overcome trauma, build resilience, and develop coping mechanisms. Various methodologies such as drawing, role play, etc were used by counsellor to facilitate group counselling sessions.

The women in the homes reported a significant improvement in self-esteem and confidence levels as a result of skills training, counselling, and therapies. They expressed a renewed sense of self-worth and belief in their abilities to overcome challenges. The counselling and therapy sessions contributed to the improvement of mental health and well-being among the women. They reported reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and trauma, along with better stress management and emotional resilience. The sessions were also conducted to address the psychological and emotional needs of survivors, offering a safe space for healing and support.

Recognizing the importance of holistic well-being,

we organized medical camps providing 135 women with access to essential healthcare services, including medical consultations, medicines, and preventive care. The shelter home staff benefitted from the camps. 16 staff members and 44 women have been advised to wear spectacles.

Anisha was arrested in a Beer Bar and, following her arrest, was sent for a medical checkup. However, out of fear, she didn't disclose her health issues. Later, at the shelter home, she met the Kshamata team, where Chitra Teacher gently encouraged her to open up. Anisha revealed that she had a severe itching problem and pus in her internal parts.

Recognizing the sensitivity of the case, Kshamata immediately arranged for medical treatment, providing her with medication and hygiene advice. With their care, her condition improved, and she is now on the path to recovery, taking better care of herself.

Our primary focus is on the hygiene and well-being of these women, as they often hesitate to open up to the police or other officials about their personal health issues. This is why our health camp has proven to be so beneficial.

It provides a safe and supportive environment where women can openly discuss their concerns without hesitation. Through these interactions, we are able to offer them the necessary medical assistance

and provide valuable hygiene tips. This approach not only addresses their immediate health needs but also empowers them with the knowledge and confidence to maintain better hygiene in the long run.

Menstrual health management & Health Awareness

Every year, we celebrate Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28. It's not just a one-day event; we run a week-long program in all shelter homes to raise awareness about the importance of menstrual health and hygiene.

Sessions focusing on menstrual hygiene management for women and girls can have wide-ranging benefits, including improved health outcomes, increased confidence, and empowerment, as well as contributing to broader social and gender equality goals. The sessions enhanced understanding of reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, and related issues, resulting in enabling women and girls to make informed decisions about their health and hygiene practices.

Many women reported that awareness sessions which they attended and knowledge gained from not only benefitted them but their families & friends also got benefitted. They shared this knowledge with their friends and family members, creating a ripple effect of positive change within their families and communities. Sessions on basic hygiene practices were held with all the women in shelter homes. They have all been given information on menstrual hygiene, personal care and cleanliness.



Life Skill Education & Job Readiness



Participation in life skills development component empowers women by enhancing their decision-making abilities, self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-esteem. It addresses the emotional and psychological needs of survivors, providing tools for coping with trauma, managing stress, and building healthy relationships. A total of 350 women learnt basic life skills during April 2023 to March 2024. Our comprehensive life skills sessions provided women with essential knowledge and competencies, including communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, decision making, and interpersonal skills. It has benefitted 270 women/girls in a year.

Life skills learned during the detention period continue to benefit women in managing stress, resolving conflicts, and maintaining healthy relationships in both personal and professional contexts. Some women have strengthened their social networks, built supportive relationships with colleagues and peers (in shelters), and actively engaged in community activities beyond the workplace.





Income Generation & Livelihood

Engaging women in vocational training has been instrumental in promoting income generation and improving livelihoods. Our program focuses primarily on tailoring and jewellery making. Women who start with basic skills are given the opportunity to advance to higher levels of training.

Both shelter homes, Shanti Sadan and Navjeevan, run these programs, providing essential vocational training that helps women gain valuable skills.

This training leads to increased self-sufficiency and financial stability, significantly enhancing their economic independence and overall well-being. More than 50% women engaged in income generation activities.

Henkel placed an order for 2,000 bags, and both Navjeevan and Shantisadan played a crucial role in fulfilling this order with Kshamata Unlimited. Navjeevan produced 200 bags, while Shantisadan completed 50 bags.

This achievement allowed them to meet their target and earn income in the first tranche. Throughout the process, women proposed valuable suggestions and ideas to expedite production.

Navjeevan successfully completed a separate order of 200 one-piece designed for a Christmas ceremony for the IGM organization, fulfilled by a team of 26 women. The IGM organization expressed their satisfaction with the product, praising the craftsmanship.





Exposure Visits

A group of 30 women, including staff from Navjeevan, was taken on an exposure visit to Green Shoppo in Thane. During their time in the detention homes, they were not permitted to go outside. For the first time, these women stepped out, and their excitement was palpable. They explored a range of eco-friendly products and learned about sustainable practices, gaining valuable insights into items that they could potentially create themselves.

Subsequently, 7 women visited the NIIFD Institute. All were deeply interested in fashion design, and the Kshamata team provided them with a valuable learning platform through NIIFD. Following their visit, each of them expressed their enthusiasm and commitment to pursuing fashion design. They shared their plans to acquire skills in fashion design and eventually start their own small businesses, inspired by the insights and knowledge gained during the visit.

Since all the women were participating in vocational training, the Kshamata team organized a visit to KTC and Kshamata Enterprises. The women were delighted to tour the production facilities and see the processes behind the products they had learned to make. They were thrilled to see their own creations being prepared for delivery. On the day of the visit, six of these women proudly wore garments they had crafted themselves, which added a special touch to their excitement and happiness.



Introducing Super 50



The Kshamata team reconnects with women after their release, offering them a chance to explore their interests through the Super 30 which turned into 50 program now. This initiative provides the opportunity for women to rebuild their lives with dignity. While many women initially focused on returning home, but Most often women face difficulties in facing the society, neighbourhood and their own family and struggled with how to reintegrate into normal life.



The aim of kshamata intervention to provide comprehensive services to women from exploitative situations so they can physically and psychologically recover from their ordeal and reintegrate back into society. The program offers a wide range of services that are available to all victims regardless of age, and nationality.

These services include counselling, legal guidance and support, skills training and job placement assistance. The Super 50 program empowers women by allowing them to choose their interests, enrol in relevant courses, and access employment opportunities, helping them to build a fulfilling and self-sufficient life.



The lives of many women are devastated by police arrests, often stemming from struggles with livelihood, sexual harassment, violence, and exploitation. Many of these women come from ordinary backgrounds but find their lives upended by these severe challenges. Sometimes, they are the sole earners for their families, and, whether knowingly or unknowingly, they may end up on the wrong path, leading them to shelter homes.

At Kshamata, we prioritize addressing their mental health needs while also focusing on their livelihood. The job placement process involved rigorous training, skill development, and personalized support to ensure the successful integration of survivors into the workforce.

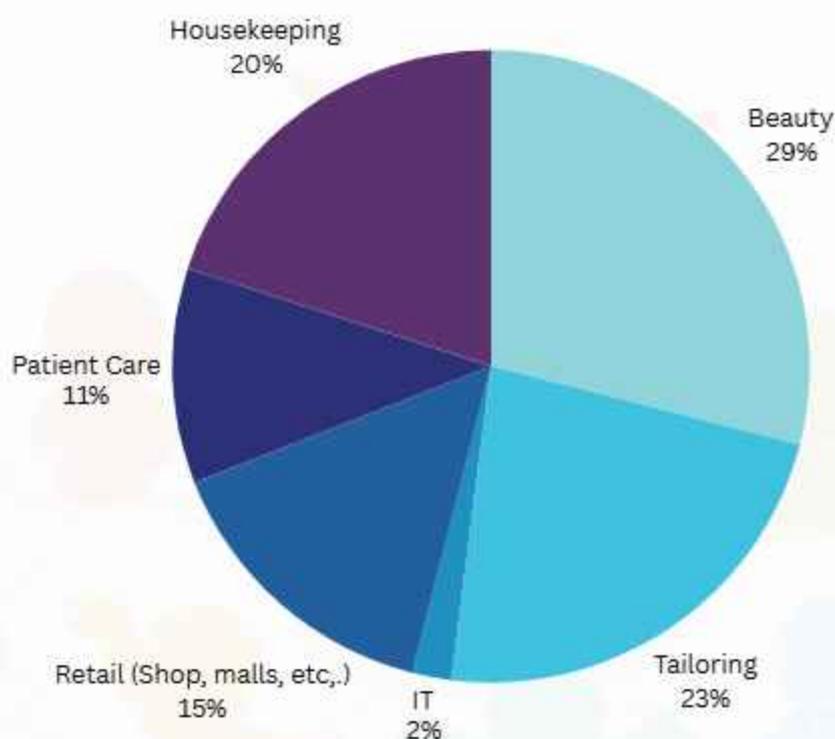
After release, Nikki's life took a new turn when Kshamata's team approached her. At barely 21, Nikki was recommended for the Super 50 Program, a decision that changed everything. Through program, she pursued her passion, enrolling in a fashion institute—a dream she once thought impossible. Reflecting on her journey, Nikki shared, "Now, I'm learning how to live." she carves out a future she once only imagined.

The job placement process involved rigorous training, skill development, and personalized support to ensure the successful integration of survivors into the workforce.

We are proud to report that 67 women have been successfully placed into various job opportunities, ranging from retail and hospitality to IT role,

thereby facilitating their economic empowerment and self-reliance. A total of 67 women secured jobs during the project period.

The following sectors represent the diverse range of employment opportunities secured by the 61 women between April 2023 & March 2024 :



Vocational Skill Training

Skills training provide women with opportunities to acquire marketable skills, thereby enabling them to pursue alternative livelihoods. By gaining economic independence, women can reduce their reliance on unethical work and improve their financial stability. It has successfully been implemented in shelter homes as a means to empower 330 women and girls by providing them with practical skills for economic independence and self-sufficiency.

104 women underwent intensive training in sewing skills, equipping them with valuable vocational expertise that can serve as a pathway to sustainable livelihood. The training modules were carefully designed to ensure practical applicability and relevance to the current market demands, empowering participants with marketable skills.

Through training in product making, women develop valuable vocational skills that enhance their employability and income-earning potential. Income generation activities provide women with opportunities to earn a livelihood during their detention of in shelter homes. The corporate and institutional orders enabled us to generate optimum income for women. We fulfilled orders for Apraava Energy, Henkel, Lubrizol, SBI Foundation and Indian Institute of Banking and Finance.

The orders provided income opportunity not only to those in shelter homes but to the other women in brothel communities also got benefitted. In a year, 60 women participated in product making, of them, 60% were consistently engaged and together they earned income of INR1,14,000/-. A total of 101 women were actively engaged in income generation activities between April 2023 to March 2024.



As women gain financial independence through income generation activities, they are less reliant on income from sex work, reducing their exposure to exploitation and violence. A group of 13 women are actively engaged in income generation program post their release from shelter homes.



Their average monthly income is INR6000/-. The successful journeys of these women demonstrate the transformative power of income generation programs in government shelter homes.

By providing women with the requisite skills, resources, and support needed to become economically independent, these interventions not only reduce vulnerability and alleviate poverty

but also promote dignity, self-reliance, and social inclusion, empowering them to opt for alternative livelihood.

Job readiness and Job placement

Job readiness training equips women with knowledge and skills to identify and avoid exploitative and violent situations. Women exiting the sex trade often face stigma and discrimination from society, employers, and even service providers, which can hinder their reintegration efforts and access to employment opportunities.

The skills acquired during training enabled them to access better job opportunities and increase their earning potential, thereby improving their economic status and livelihoods. Through customized job readiness training, women were equipped with the necessary information, knowledge and tools to navigate the job market

opportunities and demands. It has also enabled them to recognize and resist potential exploitative situations, safeguarding themselves against exploitation at workplace. A total of 52 sessions were held which benefitted nearly 161 women across four shelter homes.



Brothel & vulnerable community intervention



Life Skills

Life skills sessions are crucial for survivors of exploitation, as they provide essential social and practical skills that enable them to become self-sufficient. These sessions are conducted once a week, totaling four times a month, and are organized in multiple batches due to space limitations, with a maximum of 15 women per session.

Initially, the focus is on fundamental life skills, including nutrition, personal care, hygiene, and menstrual hygiene management. Women who consistently attend these classes are promoted to advanced levels, where the curriculum expands to include more complex topics such as decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and conflict management.

Each session begins with engaging games or motivational stories to capture attention and make the topics more relatable. Using real-life examples helps women connect more deeply with the real-life situation.

These sessions help participants understand their potential and gain new perspectives but before sessions teach problem-solving skills by first enabling women to recognize and understand their own challenge.



For years, Banu was trapped in the cycle of sex work, trafficked by unknown individuals. Despite the exploitation and vulnerability, she faced, Banu never forgot her passion for tailoring. Life skill sessions changed her life, it provided her with the confidence and support she needed to reconnect with her interest. They boosted her confidence and helped her overcome self-doubt and fear, enabling her to focus on her tailoring work with renewed determination. Now, Banu is dedicated to leaving her past behind and pursuing her passion, with the goal of abandoning sex work entirely.



Job Readiness

Job readiness refers to the state of being prepared with the necessary skills, knowledge, and personal qualities to successfully obtain and perform a job. In the community, many women are thinking to leave sex work and start small businesses or find regular employment, but their limited exposure to the outside world makes this transition challenging.

To support these aspirations, Kshamata provides job readiness sessions led by our team and experts, focusing on essential skills such as punctuality, effective communication, time management, and maintaining a professional attitude. Since most of these women

have never worked outside their community, learning these unfamiliar skills can be difficult. The training is specifically designed to address these challenges and build their confidence with these qualities. Many women who have started their own businesses or taken up jobs, such as sewing, have shared their positive experiences with the training they received.

They express how this training has significantly boosted their confidence and improved their ability to communicate effectively with others. Additionally, they have learned to maintain a professional appearance and use makeup appropriately.

While these achievements are commendable, there is still more progress to be made in their journey towards full self-sufficiency and success.

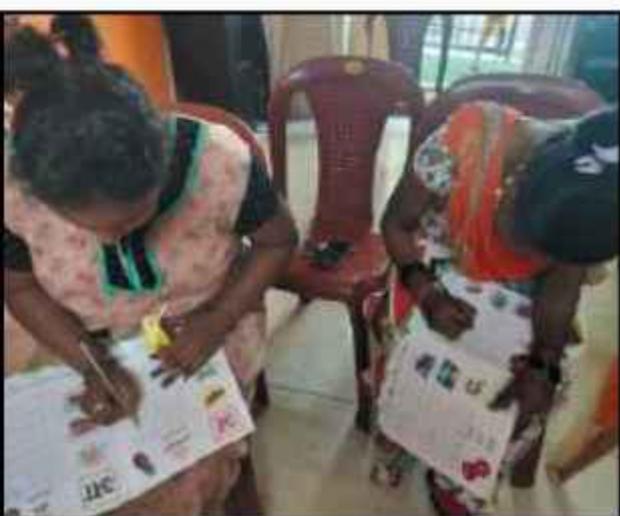


Basic and Financial Literacy



Trafficking and exploitation have resulted in a significant literacy gap among women, with the literacy rate found to be less than 20%. Many of these women, often forcibly drawn into sex work, face a harsh reality where their lack of education leaves them vulnerable to further manipulation by pimps, money lenders, clients, and partners.

To combat this issue, a basic literacy program has been introduced, focusing on fundamental education. The program begins with teaching the alphabet and progresses to helping women write their names in both Hindi and English. This initiative not only equips women with essential reading and writing skills but also empowers them by reducing their susceptibility to deception and manipulation, thus improving their overall quality of life.



Introducing literacy to women who had left it behind years ago proved to be a challenging task, as many found it difficult to grasp the importance of acquiring these skills. To address this, Kshamata's field team conducted door-to-door visits, interacting with as many women as possible to explain the benefits of literacy. They learned basic reading, writing, and financial skills, showing the program's success in helping women gain important knowledge and skills.



When Geeta first stepped into Kshamata, she was a stranger to the world of learning. Her only connection to education was the ability to recognize money notes by their color, a skill she had picked up out of necessity. One of her friends, aware of her situation, brought her to one of our literacy sessions.

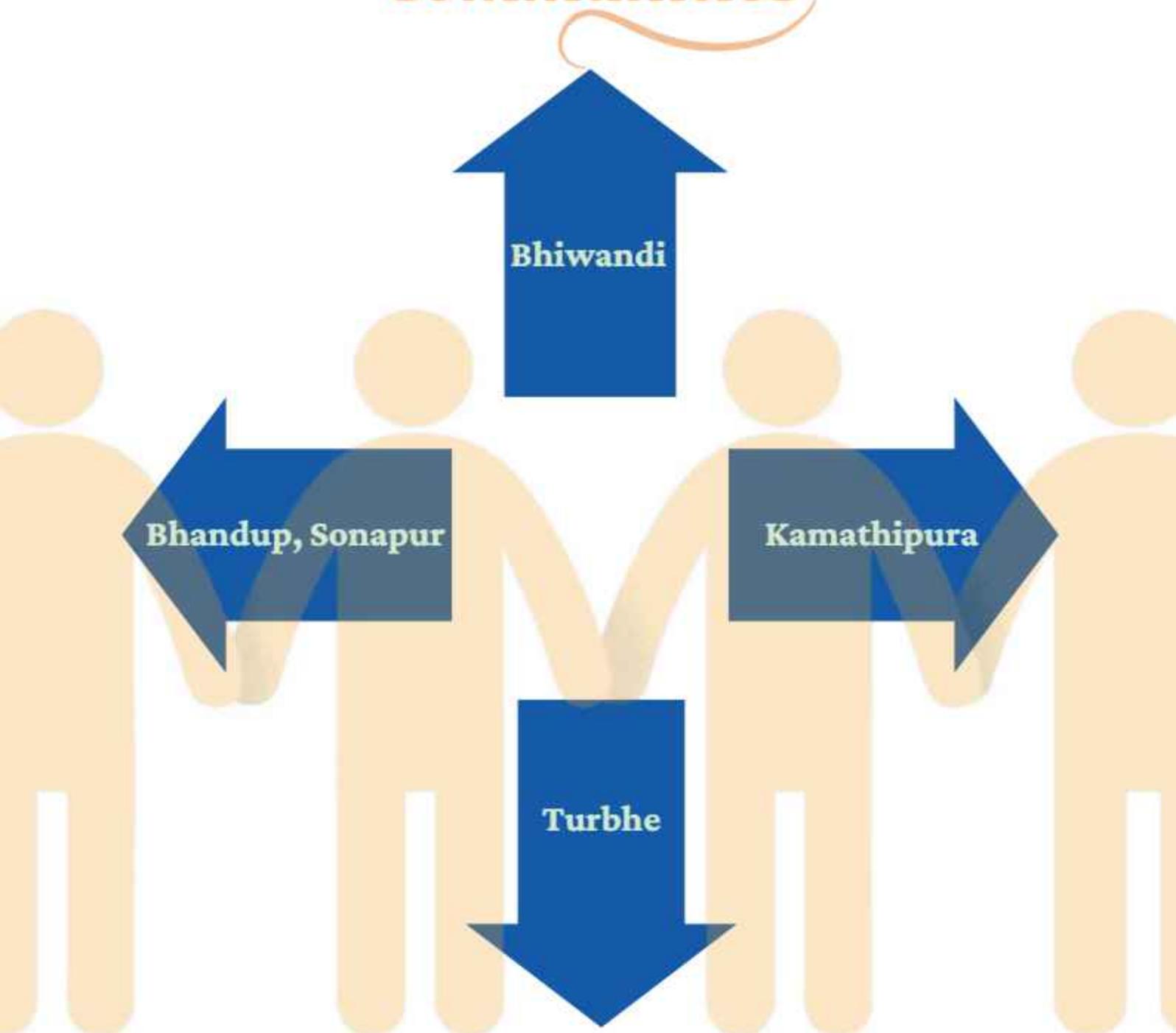
Initially, Geeta was fearful of studying, but something about the session sparked her interest. Things began to change when she joined Kshamata's literacy program. Geeta is now learning to read and write in both Hindi and English, and she has even learned to write her own name. With this newfound knowledge, she confidently declares that no one will ever mislead her again.

In addition to basic literacy, Kshamata conducts financial literacy sessions. This includes essential skills such as saving, managing a bank account, understanding debit and credit, and budgeting.

The classes are designed with flexible timings to accommodate their schedules, ensuring they can attend regularly. Both the literacy and financial literacy sessions equip the women with crucial knowledge and skills, empowering them to

manage their hard-earned money effectively.

Communities





Vocational Skill Training

Engaging women in livelihood opportunities, Kshamata provides sewing training to help them generate income. Currently, one producer works full-time, while four others attend part-time, all receiving a salary for their work. Regular training sessions attract a steady number of women, with some completing their basic training and advancing to the next level between 3 months. Those who complete the course are awarded a certificate of achievement.

Training sessions are held in two batches, running from 11 AM to 2 PM and 2 PM to 4 PM, Monday through Saturday. However, many women prefer not to attend on Fridays and Saturdays due to increased client visits on those days. The training covers the use of both full shuttle regular machines and industrial machines.

So far, women have learned to produce various items, including bags, slings, and pouches. They have also received instruction in making cloth sanitary pads and patchwork. The women find joy in seeing their finished products and receiving recognition for their efforts.

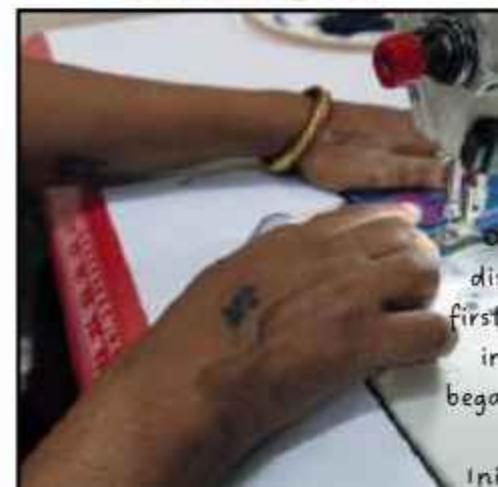


One day, Jiya rushed in with a beaming smile, proudly displaying a makeup pouch she had stitched on her very first attempt. For the past 20 years, Jiya had been trapped in the sex work. However, as she crossed her 40s, clients began to refuse her services, leaving her uncertain about her future.

Initially, Jiya had ignored the team's calls to attend the sessions, but her situation prompted a change.

Determined to find a new path, she reached out to the Kshamata team. Despite having no prior knowledge of sewing, she expressed a keen interest in learning. In just two days, Jiya managed to create her first pouch.

Inspired by her progress, Jiya is now committed to continuing her sewing journey and dreams of starting her own small tailoring business.



Income Generation

The primary goal of this project is to equip women with vocational skills and create income-generation opportunities within the community. This initiative aims to provide valuable exposure to a working environment and prepare women for mainstream jobs and businesses.

Through this project, women have actively engaged in income-generating activities and earned a respectable income. During their learning phase, they are able to earn a set amount, and once proficient, they receive a salary based on their working hours.

Along with they worked to fulfil the orders of shopping bags, tote bags, pouches and patchwork. Recently they have completed 1000 Henkle bags in one and half months also they completed scarf and katha work bag.

This income-generating activity has significantly boosted the women's confidence, allowing them to earn money with pride and regain their dignity. Additionally, it has inspired other women who were previously irregular in their training, motivating them to participate more consistently.



For years, Rupa regularly attended all the classes, learning to make pouches and bags. She always dreamed of changing her profession and living a normal life, but her circumstances left her feeling hopeless. Kshamata gave her the support and hope she needed to pursue her dream. Today, Rupa has completely left sex work behind and is now working full-time as a producer at the centre. Becoming an inspiration to other women who are looking to change their own lives.



Micro Business Training + Business Launch

Since 2022, Kshamata has been running the 'Utkarsha Micro Business' program, dedicated to empowering women in brothel communities with essential business skills. This initiative has enabled these women to start, grow, and expand their own businesses, providing them with a sustainable source of income and a path toward financial independence.

Till now, we have successfully established 100+ businesses under this program, transforming the lives of hundreds of women who were once at a risk and exploited. By equipping these women with entrepreneurial skills, we are helping them embrace dignified living and opt for sustainable livelihood.

Our goal is to continue enabling income opportunities and financial independence for survivors of gender-based violence in vulnerable communities, offering them a new perspective on life and a brighter future.

The 'Utkarsha Micro Business' initiative is designed to address the injustices faced by women by creating income-generating opportunities through micro-enterprise empowerment. Supported by a market-tested curriculum, this project focuses on facilitating dignified income opportunities for women by nurturing their entrepreneurial aspirations. Since the inception of the initiative, we have identified over 164 women who were eager to

start their own businesses and escape the cycle of exploitation. After a thorough assessment by our outreach team, a select group of 72 women, who demonstrated a serious commitment, were chosen for a comprehensive four-month training program. Over the past year, we have successfully trained all the women, providing them with the necessary support to establish their own businesses.

To support their entrepreneurial journey, we guided women through the process of obtaining a Gumasta Certificate, which serves as proof of their legal entity and right to conduct business in Maharashtra.

Additionally, we helped them open business bank accounts and access

tax subsidies and benefits from the Maharashtra State Government. We also facilitated digital transactions by processing QR code payments for many women, enhancing their business operations.



Zelan's life took a harsh turn when, after having two daughters, she was diagnosed with ovarian problems and abandoned by her husband, who wanted a son. Misled by her sister's mother-in-law with promises of better treatment, Zelan was brought to Mumbai but ended up trapped in sex work in Sonapur for 15 years. Despite her hardships, she held onto her dream of owning a Chinese food stall, a skill she had learned with her husband. With help from Kshamata's 'Utkarsha Micro Business' program she received training and financial aid. Today, Zelan runs her own Chinese food stall in Diva, has left sex work behind, and lives a dignified, independent life.

Reintegration through Kshamata Transformation Centre (KTC)



Case Management

Case management is a collaborative process which seeks participation of various stakeholders to help women take the ownership of their actions and future in an effective way. The case action planning is done through this process and women were also encouraged to participate in the process of planning which focuses on their health, career, skills, education, job readiness, etc.

Girls are always encouraged to participate in the process as it was directly related to their personal career goals and future plans. The entire process empowers the girls to decide for her future and take ownership of the same.

The overall assessment and evaluation of women has been done and follow up was done to ensure the execution was done as per plan.

A total of 32 meetings were held and detailed discussions were held and care plans have been developed for over 35 women.



Mentoring

Mentoring has been going on for 12 girls who are pursuing vocational courses outside. The mentors encourage the development of communication and personality development skills along with a career path selection.

Girls are also helped with resume making, mock interviews, body language, basic work etiquettes, etc. Girls take their mentors feedback positively and work on it in order to achieve their personal goals.



Life skills

Life skills sessions play a crucial role in the personal growth and behavioral development of the girls, helping them tackle daily challenges while nurturing their social attributes. This year, we conducted 37 basic, 68 core, and 26 advanced sessions, benefiting around 58 girls.

Since some tend to forget what they've learned, we repeat these sessions every three months to reinforce their learning.

To instil a sense of gratitude and social responsibility, we also organize exposure visits to local communities, allowing the girls to reflect on their privileges and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

In addition to these regular sessions, we also organized Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) sessions, a powerful tool for healing trauma. DMT helps the girls identify and release feelings of sadness, anger, rejection, and self-doubt, creating for constructive activities like studying, skill development, and job readiness—crucial steps toward independent living.

Our life skills sessions cover a range of vital topics including personal transformation, team building, self-awareness, goal setting, conflict resolution, menstrual hygiene management, and effective communication.

To facilitate these sessions, life

trainers use audio-visual tools. to engage participants and make learning more accessible. Additionally, they employ a variety of interactive methods like games, ice breakers, role play, and demonstrations to enhance understanding and participation.



Life skills



When Vaiju first arrived at KTC, she was disorganized and indifferent, with her early trauma leaving her deeply scarred. The sessions helped her develop responsibility and self-expression, and she began to envision her own future.

Vaiju's newfound clarity led her to pursue her education, a goal she had previously abandoned. Today, she is a different person—confident, organized, and focused, and is now on a path to pursuing her dreams with a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth.



Counselling

Crises can significantly heighten the vulnerability of girls, often leading to severe trauma. At Kshamata, we provide crucial support to help them navigate these challenges through comprehensive counselling sessions. Our program includes both individual and group counselling, conducted twice a week, aimed at facilitating recovery and emotional well-being.

Counselling, along with art-based therapy and other health interventions, plays a vital role in addressing trauma, pain, and physical ailments. Regular individual counselling sessions are held, ensuring that each girl receives personalized support. Our dedicated counsellors cover all the girls, offering tailored guidance and care.

In addition to individual sessions, group counselling is also an integral part of our program. These sessions help build connections and foster a sense of community among both new and established residents at the centre. By facilitating these interactions, we aim to strengthen relationships and support networks within the group.

In this session Counsellor mainly discussed on important but unattainable issues like emotional imbalance, anger, negative thinking, loneliness, and discomfort in adjustments, poor self-care, health struggles, and inappropriate words were tackled through individual counselling.



Health & Nutrition



A series of health awareness sessions were conducted for all the women at Kshamata Transformation Centre. Information on prevention of infectious diseases like malaria, dengue, eye flu and tuberculosis & menstrual hygiene management was given to all women through interactive sessions. The viral diseases have increased due to climate change and hence we continued holding awareness sessions for all the women at the centre.



The monthly health assessment such measurement of height & weight, temperature monitoring and monitoring of periods is done. Women with delayed periods and heavy bleeding were referred to doctor for consultation. Awareness sessions on personal care, hygiene, and cooking play a vital role in promoting health, well-being of women.

Comprehensive hygiene education and awareness sessions were organized to raise awareness and promote healthy behaviours among women, with a focus on preventive health practices, kitchen management, cooking hygiene, hand washing, safe water storage, balanced diet and regular workout.

Nutrition sessions focus on the importance of a balanced diet and the nutritional value of different foods. Cooking sessions were also organized throughout the year to teach how to prepare nutritious meals using locally available vegetables and ingredients with an emphasis on food safety and hygiene.



Asha, a participant in the awareness sessions, struggled with dental hygiene and menstrual hygiene management due to a lack of knowledge. Through the sessions, she learned proper brushing techniques, the importance of oral hygiene, and effective menstrual hygiene practices. Today, Aisha practices good hygiene habits and feels more confident and comfortable in managing her health.

A total of 12 health check-up camps were organized at Kshamata Transformation Center which benefitted 55 women. Women with mild health issues such as cold, fever, dry cough, skin infections, menstrual cramps, body ache, etc. Women who were in need of immediate medical attention were taken care of on a priority basis. Their diet was also monitored by the day care coordinator.

Regular health examinations, timely treatment, preventive measures and education on best health practices helped women keep track of their fitness and improve their overall physical health. Around 90% of women are showing improvement in their physical health



Health awareness around prevention

To enhance the girls' understanding of good health and hygiene, we conduct regular health awareness sessions. These sessions cover a range of important topics, including personal hygiene, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, skin care, and overall personal care.

We separately conducted sessions on nutrition, where we educate the girls about the essential role that a balanced diet plays in supporting both their mental and physical well-being.

By highlighting the benefits of nutritious food, we aim to help the girls make informed dietary choices that support their health.

In addition to these sessions, daily health check-ups are conducted to monitor the girls' overall health. These routines allow us to gain insights into any internal health issues they may face. By identifying potential problems early, we can provide timely interventions and support, ensuring that each girl receives the care needed to maintain her health and well-being.



Skill-Training and Job Readiness

Job readiness sessions are a significant part of Kshamata's efforts to empower trafficked and vulnerable women as they begin their journey toward financial independence. These women often face significant challenges, arriving terrified and unsure of how to communicate, manage their emotions, or understand essential concepts such as work ethics and professional behaviour.

Through our job readiness program, Kshamata addresses these barriers, equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce. This year, we arranged 42 Job Readiness sessions, including both basic and core levels.

These sessions go beyond basic job skills, focusing on building confidence and emotional resilience. Women learn how to effectively communicate, collaborate in a team environment, and manage workplace expectations.

These sessions are designed to instil professionalism and nurture a deeper understanding of work ethics, preparing the women for a sustainable livelihood. Through personalized guidance, vocational training, and life skills development, we help them bridge the gap between aspiration and achievement.

By focusing on job readiness, we empower women to regain control of their lives, paving the way for independence and long-term success. A total of 25 women received comprehensive training in sewing, jewellery and advanced skills to enhance their employability and income-generating potential, with certification awarded to those who completed the program.

The training sessions were conducted regularly, allowing the women to refine their abilities and gain confidence in their craftsmanship. Their monthly evaluation is done by social enterprise manager and Project coordinator. The other women are continuing their education and helping as peer trainers at the centre.

In keeping with the curriculum, assembly line production training is being imparted to the trainees, wherein each component of the product is taught individually. Training is also imparted in billing, store keeping, inventory management, packaging and dispatch.



Skill-Training and Job Readiness



Monika never imagined her life would take such a drastic turn. After a police raid, she was arrested along with other girls and sent to a shelter home. Traumatized and reluctant, she wasn't interested in staying at Kshamata after her release. However, things began to change when she attended vocational sessions. Slowly, she developed a passion for embroidery, which sparked a new sense of purpose in her life. Now, Monika is determined to pursue embroidery as a career, eager to push herself toward a brighter future and leave her past behind.

Manu Didi was seated on a chair when Shabana came up from behind and hugged her warmly. "Shabana, what happened?" Manu Didi whispered. With a wide smile, Shabana replied, "Didi, my manager appreciated me today, and you'll never believe it—I've been promoted to Morning Shift In charge at the cake shop!" Manu Didi beamed with pride, congratulating her. Shabana, still glowing with excitement, added, "Didi, our job readiness sessions really helped me. I can confidently talk to customers without any fear." This promotion was just one of many achievements Shabana had worked hard for, a true reflection of her growth and newfound confidence.

Exposure & Learning trips

At Kshamata, we believe in creating meaningful learning opportunities for the women and girls. This year, we organized 37 exposure visits to various locations. These visits were designed to give the girls real-world experience, helping them gain practical knowledge while expanding their horizons.

We took them to places like McDonald's in Dombivli, where they learned about teamwork, customer service, and the intricacies of managing a fast-paced business. At Tech Mahindra Smart Academy in Bandra, they were introduced to training in digital skills and technology, opening their minds to career possibilities in these growing fields. The girls also visited Somarseth Exports, where they were able to explore tailoring work.

In addition, the Fire & Safety Training Centre provided them the insights for handling emergencies, while the visit to Cai Wai Café in Vile Parle allowed them to see entrepreneurship in action, especially within the hospitality industry.

These experiences have been invaluable for the girls, many of whom come from vulnerable backgrounds. Through each visit, they not only learned about different industries but also gained confidence and a broader understanding of the world outside. Through these opportunities, girls have gained a deeper understanding of potential career paths, strengthened their decision-making abilities, and been inspired to pursue their goals with renewed

determination. These exposure visits have empowered them to envision a brighter future, armed with the knowledge and confidence to succeed.





Successful Transition to economic independence and independent living

By addressing both medical and nutritional concerns, the project is enabling women to focus on their education, training and well-being. Beyond meeting immediate needs, the intervention has empowered women to take control of their health and well-being.

Through access to groceries, and nutrition supplements, women have gained a greater sense of autonomy and self-determination, enabling them to make informed choices about their health and lifestyle & empowering them to transition to independent living.

A total of 45 women enrolled for short term and long-term vocational training courses. Women were enrolled in courses such as beauty care, nursing, culinary, retail management, diploma in dialysis technician, fire safety, diploma in medical lab technician, general duty assistant, hair dresser training and so on.

Till March 2024, we assisted 31 women with job placements in various sectors empowering them to transition towards economic independence, independent living and self-reliance.



Case Stories!



Unraveled : Shahira's Story of Change

Life is unpredictable, and no one truly knows where it will take them. While everything around us may seem normal, but not everyone is fortunate enough to experience that sense of normalcy. Shahira, in her attempt to move past her difficult memories, often says, "*Beete baaton ko yaad kyun karna,*" as if trying to erase the pain of her past. Yet, deep down, she still finds herself questioning, "Why me?"

At just 15, Shahira was trafficked by her own relatives in exchange for money. Deceived and lured, she ended up in Bhiwandi Brothel Community, where she has lived for the past 20 years. Unhappy with the life she was forced into, whole time she was forced for sex work to earn the good amount of money, however Shahira never had the chance to learn or gain an education or even explore the world.

Though money was essential for survival so she could only recognize money by its color, but lacks the understanding of how to manage the expenses. Consequently, she was easily manipulated by moneylenders and now faces huge debts.

She was often beaten by clients, and within the brothel, there was always a painful divide between fair and dark-skinned women. The constant fight to attract more clients and earn enough money seemed never-ending—until Kshamata stepped in to support the women of the community.

During this time, she began living with her partner and was blessed with a baby girl. While having a child brought her immense joy, it also intensified her struggles. She was determined that her daughter

would not follow the same path, but raising her amidst these circumstances felt like an overwhelming challenge.

Sometimes, she would dream of living a normal life, but her harsh reality always pulled her back, making her question, How will I raise my daughter? Without education or support from the community, who will give me a job? These thoughts swirled in her mind, day after day.

When Kshamata opened a Community Centre in Bhiwandi, she found a glimmer of hope. She began attending sessions regularly, sitting quietly at first, but slowly, the discussions started giving her the answers she had been seeking. With newfound courage, she approached the Kshamata team and shared her struggles, expressing her

deep desire to leave her current life behind and build a better future for herself and her daughter.

The Kshamata team stepped in to help her transform her life, offering her the support she desperately needed. The first piece of advice was simple but crucial: attend all sessions regularly, especially those focused on literacy—both basic and financial. Having had no formal education, she started from scratch, learning the alphabet in English and Hindi. Day by day, she began to grasp the fundamentals, slowly gaining confidence in her abilities.

As she made progress, the team introduced her to the Utkarsha Micro Business program, designed to empower women in the community to start their own small businesses

The idea of financial independence sparked a new sense of hope in her. For the first time in years, she felt that she could break free from the life she had known and live a life of dignity and self-reliance. The possibility of starting her own business filled her with excitement, as she realized she could build a brighter future, free from the hardships of her past. For the first time, she began to believe that a normal, fulfilling life was within her reach.

She always had a knack for stitching clothes, particularly sewing salwars, and the Kshamata team saw her potential.

Recognizing her passion and potential, the Kshamata team advanced her training through vocational courses, teaching her how to make pouches and bags—items she could create from home during her free time. Through the Utkarsha Micro Business program, she was provided with a sewing machine, which opened up new doors of opportunity for her.

She began contributing to large pouch orders for Kshamata while also taking on private stitching work to boost her earnings. Her passion and dedication soon paid off. She gradually let go of her old work and embraced her new life as a full-time producer at Kshamata.

But that wasn't all. Her love for cooking inspired her to start Home made delivery service. Every morning, she would sell fresh Idli, Vada, and sambar, adding another source of income. Her days were now filled with purpose—no longer bound by the limitations of her past.

Even after giving up sex work and establishing a new source of income, the gharwali (community head) pressured Shahira to return to her previous life. Determined to leave that world behind, Shahira refused, but the pressure was relentless.

She realized that in order to fully escape the grip of the brothel community, she had to move away. With guidance from the Kshamata team, Shahira made the brave

decision to relocate. She, her partner, and their daughter shifted to Sonali Gaon, far from the brothel community. They now live happily in their own 1 RK home, a space they proudly call their own.

Shahira continues her work as a full-time producer with Kshamata, transforming her life through the skills she's learned. Now, the Kshamata team is helping her find a stable job with Flipkart, where she can earn a better income and support her family independently.

Reflecting on her journey, she says, *"Yeh hamari majburi hoti hai ki hum yaha hain... yeh kaam karte hain. Yeh by choice nai hota, par Kshamata mai jakar apni zindagi badalne ka choice apna ho sakta hai. Didi itna accha batate hain jo kabhi suna bhi nai... hamare yaha sab jagadte the, yaha aake hasna sikhha, khelna sikhha. jindagi mai yahi tho chahiye tha"*

Through Kshamata's support, Shahira has discovered a new path—one where happiness, laughter, and hope are not distant dreams but part of her everyday life.





Nearby, a small shop owner was watching with keen interest. Curious, he approached the girl and asked, "Why did you give her your tiffin? What will you eat now?" She shrugged and replied, "It's okay. I'll eat in the evening. We never know when this little one will get food again." The shop owner was amazed and said, "18 ki hai but gun hai 36 ke".

Muskan, her simple act of kindness didn't just fill an empty stomach; it brought a smile to a little one's face. Muskan's own smile had faded when she was little, lost in the struggles of her early life but now she was bringing smiles to others. When the shopkeeper asked her about her act of kindness, his words triggered a journey through her painful past, revealing how far she had come.

Muskan's childhood was far from ordinary. When she was a child her father abandoned her mother, who was still a teenager. Left to care for three children alone, her mother faced a lot more challenges. Despite finding a place to live, making ends meet was a constant struggle. To support her family, she took up housework, but she had to leave the children alone.

Her work was not sufficient to fulfill her children's needs, as their situation grew increasingly dire. Muskan's mother made a bold and difficult decision and she enrolled Muskan and her sister in a hostel, hoping it would provide them with a chance at a better life. Muskan's real-life struggle began, and it started with the challenge of survival.

In 2017, Muskan was enrolled in Navjyoti Children's Home. Initially, she felt lost and unsure of how to navigate to the new environment. Fortunately, senior girls took her under their wings, helping her find stability. Although Muskan felt alone and missed her mother deeply, she respected her mother's decision and continued her education and remarkably, served

A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

Muskan

At a busy traffic signal, a young girl stood crying, and begging for money. Most people walked past without a glance, too busy in their own lives. Suddenly, a gentle voice caught the girl's attention. An 18-year-old girl approached, offering her a tiffin box instead of money.

At first, the little girl hesitated, but she grabbed the tiffin box and started eating the roti, sabji. While eating, her tears dried up, and she began to smile—a smile that was truly priceless.



as in-charge for three years while balancing her studies. Despite the immense challenge of juggling both responsibilities, Muskan completed her 10th grade at Navjyoti.

Muskan was not happy because her life was not normal like others. After completing the 10th grade Muskan decided to return home. She missed her mother, she wanted to spend every moment with her, no more hostel but mother's condition wasn't good financially, hardly fed to Muskan's brother. Muskan's decision to return home made her more worried.

She understood her mother's concern, despite not yet being an adult, Muskan's thought was surprisingly mature. She began a small, affordable tuition class with two goals in mind. First she wanted to support her mother financially, second she aimed to teach students who couldn't afford tuition but still aspired to achieve good marks.

Despite conducting regular tuition classes, she was still struggling with her thoughts about what to do next? During that period she aspired to complete her 12th grade and in 2023, she enrolled in Kshamata, which turned out to be the greatest opportunity she had.

There, she experienced a comprehensive transformation. Initially focused on finishing her education, she soon discovered a world of opportunities through Kshamata's various sessions like Life Skills, Vocational courses, DMT sessions, Job Readiness, Exposure visits, counseling etc.

Muskan used to enjoy the counseling sessions, job readiness training, and DMT. Following her passions, she chose a culinary course and specialized in the bakery section. The dream she had of becoming independent was about to come true and she got an opportunity to work in a cake shop.

At just 18 years old, she has now taken charge of the morning shift, stepping into her new role with a sense of responsibility and confidence. Living independently with the support of Kshamata, she faces the world with courage and determination every day. Her journey from a vulnerable child to a strong, confident young girl has been remarkable.

Kshamata has provided her not only with a safe and supportive environment but also with countless opportunities to grow and learn. With the encouragement and resources from Kshamata, she has developed the skills and self-assurance needed to navigate life's challenges. Now, she lives like an independent girl, ready to embrace her future. Kshamata has truly opened up the entire sky for her to fly, allowing her to dream big and pursue her goals with unwavering confidence.

This is the story of Muskan, but there are still many others like her who are coping with their situations and waiting for their wings to fly. They need the strength and confidence that we call 'Kshamata.' With the right support and encouragement, they too can rise above their challenges and embrace a brighter future.





I've had a wonderful experience with Kshamata over the past few months, and I urge everyone to come and join hands with this incredible organization. Kshamata doesn't just take care of the needs of these girls—they empower them. Kshamata is helping women become independent, which is something we need to share and support. I encourage everyone to come together with Kshamata so we can make a difference in each and every life.

- NEENA SOFTA (VOLUNTEER)



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