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子育てと教育支援を主とした 単親家庭の母親支援プログラムの評価

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An Evaluation Of Intervention Programmes For Single Mothers Associated Through Child Care Assistance And Sponsorship Programme

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Abstract

This article tries to evaluate the support programme for female-headed households run by one of the NGOs in Pune, India, and to make a suggestion to improve the project for the next step. The services which the target group receives include child care assistance and educational sponsorship. The research finding shows some improvements in the child education and the mothers' psychological status but it doesn't seem to contribute to the mothers' empowerment, instead, it may discourage their independence due to the services' nature. The author suggests the mothers' initiation and participation in planning the programme in order to encourage their empowerment based on the outcome of the focus group discussions.

Key Words: mothers' empowerment, participation, female-headed household

Introduction

The proportion of female-headed households as per the 2001 census in India is around 13-14% and the number is rapidly on the rise. Micro studies in some parts of the country where the male migration is high show that about 40% of households are female-headed. Coping with the problems of a single-income household and finding ways to go-on without support systems is very hard (Moghadam 2005). Key characteristics of female-headed families are the limited resources (especially time, energy, and money) available to them. They suffer from daily struggles and long-term disadvantages (Nita 2006, Sign 1988). The issues of shortage of quality time with children, economic struggles and discrimination are among the seemingly endless problems these families must solve. The reasons for becoming female-headed household include an unpredictable tragedy as in the death of one parent, divorce, migration, or

abandonment by one parent. Many single parents and their children often have to face stigma, violence and social problems based on mainly prejudice (Dhanyasree 2008).

The most basic concerns that they may be facing are providing an adequate role model for the missing parent and a lack of economical and psychological back up. Parenting their adolescent children is especially difficult when they have an adolescent boy in a nuclear family (Raj-Kamla 2009).

Divorce

Some survey states that over the past four years the divorce rate in Delhi, the capital city of India has almost doubled and is projected to be 12000 by the year 2008. In 2006, Bangalore, it was recorded that 1,246 cases of divorce were filed in the court. It has been estimated Mumbai has up to 4,138 in 2007 while cities that are acknowledged for their cultural richness and social values like Kolkata and Chennai, are no less behind. Agro based states like Punjab and Haryana are now seeing an increase of 150% of divorce rate since the last decade. Kerala, known to be the most literate state has experienced an increase of divorce rate by 350% in the last 10 years. Whether divorcing is a matter of choice or no choice, divorced single mothers face the similar problems such as economic difficulty and parenting adolescent sons/daughters (Patel 2005, Rajalakshmi Sriram and Parul Dave 2009).

Mothers and Adolescent children

Adolescence and young adulthood are particularly stressful and traumatic stages in the lives of Indian youths because the society is more traditionally family-oriented. They desire emancipation and liberation from family but residing in the female-headed family makes it more difficult for them to assert themselves and exhibit independence in thought, action, or behavior because they feel the mother is too busy in earning for the family. Social changes are gradually happening but sex and sexuality issues are not openly discussed: sex education is not readily available: interrelationships with the opposite sex are discouraged. In the traditional Indian family, communication between parents and children tends to be one sided. Children are expected to listen, respect, and obey their parents. Generally, adolescents do not share their personal concerns with their parents because they believe their parents will not listen and will not understand their problems (Medora, Larson, and Dave PB 2000). That makes single mothers harder to cope with their adolescent children when the children have more serious problems such as drug abuse, delinquency, young pregnancy, HIV/AIDs, and violence. The mothers whom we interviewed reported their children had higher risk because they faced the death of the father, school failure, and early initiation of sexual relationship with the opposite sex (Richard W. Franke and Barbara H. Chasin, 2004).

Based on the baseline survey, we found the majour concerns of the mothers are coping with their adolescent sons/daughters and economic unstableness.

We planned a new job training course and conducting youth and health education seminar to deal with

both problems.

The next section the author talks about the baseline survey and pre-test for the action project for the single mothers whom we deal with through the organization called Shishuadhar.

Chapter 1 Back Ground

Shishuadhar For the Child is a welfare organization established in 1985 with view to secure child's right to family, education and development. It works as an adoption co-ordinating agency and around 18 adoption agencies are affiliated to Shishuadhar. It started non institutionalised services in 1993 and since then the main objectives were to prevent the children from dropping out of school, getting institutionalised or abandoned, and starting work at an early age or coming in conflict with the law. The organization offers Educational Sponsorship, Child Care Assistance, Personality Development Camps, Case Work and Counseling.

1.1 Balsangopan Yojana

The Programme of Child Care Assistance, or Bal-Sangopan Yojana offers financial assistance for care and maintenance of a child within the family. The assistance is offered to widowed, deserted or single mothers for care of their children or to the foster parents for care of orphaned children. The organization implements this programme in 5 districts in Maharashtra state.

1.2 Educational Sponsorship Scheme

Under this Educational Sponsorship Programme, financial assistance, and medical and nutritional assistance are given as per the requirement. Counseling, follow up, personality development camps and family life education sessions are integral parts of the program. Both the programmes are different in nature but are based on one common objective to help the child and his/her family develop and nurture in the family environment, without making them dependent.

1.3 Experiences with mothers

Since both the services are child centered but mother is the main socializing agent of the child, hence having close contact with the mother is essential. Over a period of time, the organization has come across with various issues of single mothers or female-headed house-holds.

- Insecurities due to widowhood or desertion, social isolation, sudden responsibility of the household.
- Lack of skills to handle it, overburden due to double duty, managing the house and work outside simultaneously.
- Absence of male role model for children affects the overall emotional development of children.
- Difficulties in handling adolescents and increased societal pressure as children grow. Clashes with children, traditionally women get secondary status but when male child grows and there are conflicts due to power position, similarly in case of female children insecurities are increased with the age of daughter.
- Psychosocial and psychosomatic disorders.

- Difficulties due to poor socio-economic situation.

Considering the above issues, the organization has developed programmes for holistic development of children and empowering mothers. It is believed that empowerment of mothers will not only help the family to come out of distress but will also make them self reliant and independent and it will help mothers to create conducive atmosphere for growth and development of children. The author has been helping this organization and trying to assess their programme to improve and help start the new programme based on the survey.

Chapter 2 Methodology, Rationale

Though the social workers observe that due to long term association with the family and many intervention programmes, there are changes in the mothers' parenting capacities or personality. All the programmes so far were planned on ad hoc basis there was no systematic planning. Based on our results we may be able to develop empowerment intervention programme. This will be more or less standardized programme. This can easily be replicated elsewhere with little modification to suit the need of the stakeholders.

2.1 Aims and objectives of research:

1. Prepare baseline data regarding current situation and problems faced by them.
2. To design and implement programmes for empowerment of mothers.
3. To test the effectiveness of the programmes in terms of overall change in the attitude, lifestyle and family situation of the respondents.

2.2 Significance:

We all accept that development is gradual and a series of progressive changes. Empowerment is to be able to gain control over their destinies and influence the society. Both are ongoing processes. This research will help the organization to plan its activities related to this programme in more systematic and realistic way. It will document the various steps undertaken in empowering mothers and will be helpful in planning for subsequent years. It will also be useful in analyzing the impact of organization's efforts and can be useful in presenting it before the respondents where they were at the start of one year and what they have achieved in one year's time which also can be a measure to assess their own improvement as a family or as an individual and further bar can be raised every year. For the organization, this will be its own assessment in terms of input and outcome what is expected at the end of duration of one year.

2.3 Scope and limitations:

This research is based on study of 20-25 respondents who are single mothers associated with Shishuadhar through Balsangopan Yojana or Sponsorship Programme and are the sole bread winner of the family whose children fall under adolescence age group.

2.4 Assumptions:

- Women possess complete potential to transform their world if given right opportunity at the right time.
- If a woman is empowered, the effect is on the entire family and everyone in world that revolves around her.

2.5 Research questions: For baseline survey

1. What is the status of their life in terms of personal, professional and social self?
2. Do they need to work on relationships? How can they improve it so that they get support when needed?
3. Do they possess the skills for running the house independently? Which are those?
4. Do they need to change, if yes which way?

For post activity survey

1. How the programmes have helped them to move forward and how?
2. How programmes have helped them to attain better life for themselves?
3. What should be the plan of the organization over years considering the first year's outcome or achievement?

2.6 Definition of empowerment:

The general definition: The term empowerment has been emerged as a 'development buzzword' it is easy to understand but complex to define. "An empowered individual would be one who experiences a sense of self-confidence and self-worth; a person who critically analyzes his/her social and political environment; a person who is able to exercise control over decisions that affect his/her life". On the other hand, it can also be conceived as a process that people undergo, which eventually leads to individual changes and social changes (Speer & Hughey 1995, Wilson 1996).

Operational definition of empowerment for this survey:

1. Having decision-making power.
2. Assertiveness.
3. Being hopeful.
4. Balancing emotions, expressing and controlling anger, grief.
5. Changing one's perceptions of self competency and capacity to act.
6. Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming distress.
7. Influencing the family and society.

2.7 Research Design:

Action Research is being done in 3 stages.

1. Pre-test for need assessment.
2. Intervention programmes.
3. post-test for impact assessment.

Sampling Design: mothers of adolescent children (age group 10-14 years) who are associated with Shishuadhar through Balsangopan Yojana or sponsorship Programme. Sample Size: 20-25 respondents

Tools for data collection:

1. Guidelines Secondary data source - through case files.
- 2 Interview schedule.
- 3 Focused group discussions.

Chapter 3 Data analysis

In order to select the respondents (mothers of adolescent children) for action research, baseline data was very important to study. This data has been collected by picking selected fields on the intake sheets filed in the case files of children who are being supported by Shishuadhar through Balsangopan Yojana and Sponsorship Programme. A guideline was used to collect the data regarding age, marital status, occupation, income, and housing and about their adolescent children in the family.

With the help of the secondary data we can understand the socio-economic background of the women. (Balsangopan Yojana-37 records, Sponsorship Programme-24 records)

3.1 Base line data : The Socio-economic profile of mothers

A) Age group

Base line data shows maximum mothers (36%) fall under the age group of 31-35 years of age which is starting of mid-adulthood, the next two ranges 36-45 comprising of 23% each making total 46% fall under middle age which is a typically loaded by maximum family responsibility and only 2 mothers are 46 years old and above, by this time children grow and become independent.

B) Education

Around 30 % mothers are illiterate, maximum mothers around 43% are educated up to secondary school level and around 16% have completed their school education as they have passed the 10th standard. Only 10 have studied up to 12th standard, it is not known if they had tried for higher education or formal education opportunity ceased for them after 12th standard.

When we look at the relationship of education and occupation of mothers, there is no specific trend is seen as far as the educational level of mothers and choice of occupation. Out of 18 (30%) illiterate mothers maximum numbers are working as domestic helper. One more interesting observation we can make that there are two mothers who has passed 10th standard and still serving as domestic helper, there are equal number of secondary educated mothers have chosen other professions such as Anganwadi worker (Early Child Education worker), field worker in NGO, vegetable vendor or working as care taker in hospital. Where as those who are not literate but are in other occupations are either sweeping or in garbage collection. Those who are farm workers or daily wage workers comprise of both illiterate and literate.

C) Monthly Income

Maximum cases are low socio-economic background and we can clearly see around 1/3rd number of

mothers earn less than Rs1500 (R1 ÷ ¥2) per month. The next range is Rs 1501-2000 and Rs2001-2500 at 21% each. Very few mothers have monthly income more than Rs3000 per month. This kind of financial condition is one of the basic conditions for being eligible for Balsangopan Yojana or Sponsorship Scheme.

Only 6% mothers are getting more than the lowest minimum wages as per Maharashtra States' minimum wages. The lowest minimum wages for unskilled work in tobacco industry is Rs 121.68 which comes around Rs 3650 per month¹. We can see that almost all of them except these last 4 are earning lower than the lowest minimum wage. Most of them are working in unorganized sector.

D) Marital Status and type of family

Major group of data shows that around 72% women are widows. Around 49% of these mothers are running the household without any support from parents or in-laws. Around 13% widows stay in the matrimonial house with in-laws. In such cases both the parties are dependent on each other, this daughter in-laws provides physical and emotional support to the aged parents of their deceased husbands. We can see that only 10% get the maternal support. In case of married women, 18% are staying with husbands in a nuclear family set up, only one is a woman headed family and one is staying with in-laws.

E) No. of children

Around 48% families are having 2 children; next to this 30% families have 3 children each. Around 10% each family has single child and four children. Only one family has 5 children. Shishuadhar provides Balsangopan Scheme and/or Sponsorship Programme to maximum 2 children per family.

F) Families with adolescent children

The age group of children varies from 1 year to 18 years of age. When we checked the no of families having adolescent children, we found that around 40 families are having children from age 10-15 years. There are 28% of families having only adolescent boys, around 20 % of families are having adolescent girls and major 52 % families have children of both sexes in the household.

G) Association with Shishuadhar

Around 6 % families are having association with Shishuadhar between eight to ten years and ten to fifteen years. Maximum families fall under category of three to seven years.

H) Housing

Around 69 % families are staying in their own house whereas 21% stay in rented accommodation, and balance 10% other comprise of government quarters, houses owned by close relatives.

3.2 Pre-testing

In order to do pretest, all the mothers along with their children were invited for 'Tilgul Samarambh', a traditional celebration of harvest. A small gathering was organized on the last day of Jan. Exchanging tilguls as tokens of goodwill people greet each other saying - "Tilgul ghya god bola "accept these tilguls and speak sweet words". The under-lying thought in the exchange of tilguls is to forget the past ill feelings, to speak sweetly and remain friends. This kind of program was specifically chosen to kick off

this action research.

While children were busy in games, interesting activities including painting, dance and music organized by students volunteers from Karve Institute of Social Service, mothers were explained the objectives of this action research.

A pre-test has been done by using interview schedule. The questions on the interview schedule covered major areas as shown below.

- A) Personal Information–age, education, type of family, work experience, health status
- B) Occupation related–nature of work, comfort level, satisfaction, future prospects
- C) Personality–decision making, self confidence, capacity to withstand, self development
- D) Parenting–knowledge and skills, perception, limitations, issues, children’s future
- E) Relationships–type of family, inter personal relationships
- F) Association with Shishuadhar–participation in programme planning

As per plan we expected 20-25 mothers who would be respondents for this action research. A sample of 21 respondents has been considered in this report.

A) Personal Information

1 Age group

85 % mothers are between 30-35 years

15 % mothers are between 36-40 years

2 Education level

There is lot of variation in the education level of these mothers. 42% are illiterate, only 5% studied primary, again 42% studied till secondary level but not completed 10th. Only 2 mothers (10%) have passed their 10th level exam.

3 Work experience

Around 43% mothers are working for last 1-5 years and similar percentage is working since last 6-10 years. We can say that they must have started working since 20-25 years of age.

4 Health status

- Around 70% reported to have health problems.
- Major health problems are psycho somatic in nature such as insomnia, drowsiness.
- Minor health problems are cough, cold, chronic weakness, anemia, body pain, spondylitis, heavy menstrual flow.
- Some respondents are HIV + and are on ART, the treatment is not affordable.
- Govt. Health care facilities are not easily accessible. Most of them take over the counter medicines, home remedies or opt for private doctor’s treatment as the case may be.

5 Relationship with other organization / NGO

Around 6 (29 %) mothers are associated with Self Help Groups and are regular members for small savings.

B) Occupational data

1. Nature of work

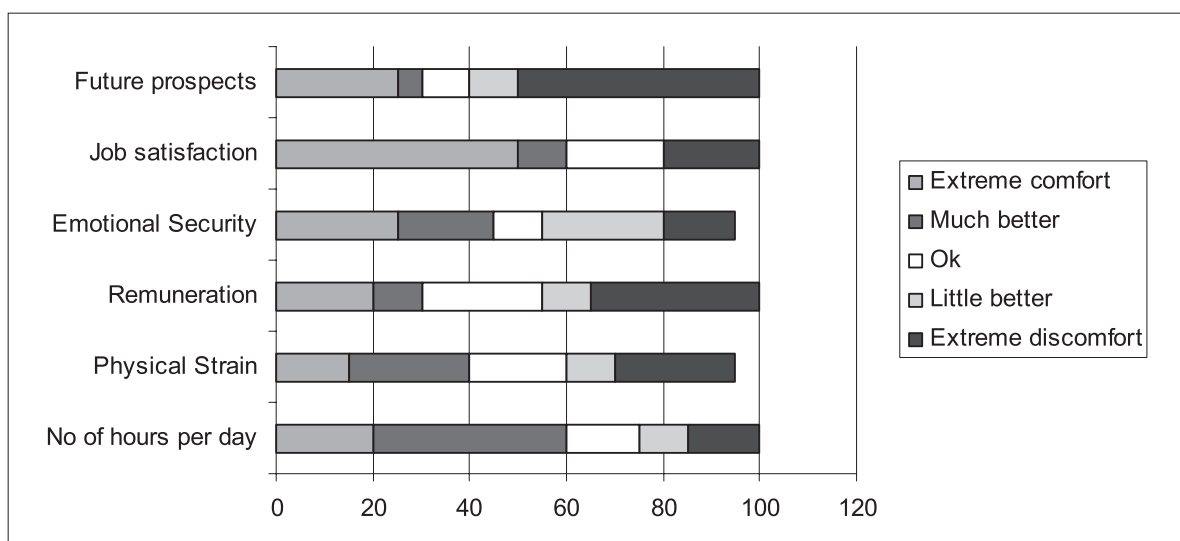
Maximum mothers (around 42%) are working as domestic help. Other professions comprising of balance 58% of data.

Table 1 – Nature of work

Nature of work	Nos	%
Domestic help	9	42
Canteen worker	2	10
Hospital staff / Sweeper	4	19
Farm worker / Daily wage worker	4	19
Vendors, working in shops	2	10
Total	21	100

2. Comfort level in current job / profession

Chart 1 – comfort level scale



From chart no 1 we can see that there are very less future prospects as far as growth is concerned. But at the same time maximum 50% are satisfied with their current job as such. As far as physical strain is concerned, it has got varied response, may be it is based on the individual's capacity and perception. Overall 55 % respondents seem to be satisfied with emotional security provided at the workplace or by employers.

3. Stress level

- Around 91% respondents are having lot of stress of being the only earning member of the family and no other support to fall back.
- Some other problems such as handicapped child to look after act as stressors other than the above reason

- Double duty, no one to share the burden makes life more difficult, which adds further stress in life.

C) Personality

1. Decision making

- Around 60% respondents can take independent decisions, some of them are confident of themselves and some are without any support and forced to take decision.
- 25% respondents are unable to take decision on their own, due to their submissive personality or lack of confidence in self.
- Rests either consult the family members or friends in taking important decisions.

2. Self confidence

- 65% responded that they feel helpless or frustrated in certain situations, sometime in small matters due to lack of support system external as well as internal. Some go under depression and feel suicidal but change thoughts thinking about their children.
- 25% are confident themselves and try to find solution in crisis situation, some of them have tried to change the environment to help themselves e.g. leaving matrimonial house and staying independently.
- 10% could not decide if they are confident, it depends on the situation. They are doubtful about their child's education and marriage responsibilities in future.

3. Capacity to handle demanding life situations

- It is difficult to meet the both ends in single earning source day by day. Around 50% of mothers are not able to fulfill the basic needs of the family and it is effecting in lot of self blame or guilt feeling.
- Due to low income, regret that they have not taken enough education to earn more money and hence they try to fulfill their wish through their children. They realize importance of education for children only to have a better job not much for development of the child.

4. Areas for self development

- Some of them could not understand the question as they had never ever thought about their life so seriously and expressed about their wish for self development. Around 50% bluntly said no for any self development.
- Some of them want to take up education or acquire skills required for income generation.
- Some spoke about the quality of life and express their readiness for changes. Time management, emotional balance, and learning to be happy are few other areas they want to work on.

D) Parenting

1. Current issues-difficulties

- Children are growing and mothers are finding it difficult to cultivate moral values and disciplining due to absence of male role model.
- Double burden on women leave no time and energy for self development and spending time with

children or other relatives.

- Being a single mother, lot of issues with neighbors and associates. People look down upon them was a major experience.

2. Parenting / limitations

- Due to less time, most of them are unable to cook good nutritious food.
- As they are working through out the day, not able to give proper perspective about the roles and duties of children.
- Due to less exposure and education, they cannot guide children.
- Feel afraid to take independent decisions about children.

3. Current situation owing to adolescent changes in children

- There is increased communication gap between mothers and children. Children prefer not to talk or very little sharing is being done. They are stubborn and adamant with their mothers.
- Irresponsible behaviors, lack of efforts and motivation.
- Due to increased working hours, distancing from children.
- Peer group pressure.
- Adolescent sons are more difficult to cope with than daughters.

Mothers take help from the school, neighborhood, Shishuadhar when they face certain problems as regards to their child. Although they say they don't have social support other than Shishuadhar Group, it seems they hesitate to show their ability because they can't get financial support otherwise. It may discourage the mothers' independence.

4. Views about future of children

- They expect the children should be educated and become independent so that they are relieved from their parental responsibility.
- Most of the mothers are thinking about career prospects not only for their sons but also their daughters but majorly they are thinking about marriage for their daughters and higher education for sons.

E) Relationships

1. Type of family: Almost half (52%) of the number are heading the family and next 24 % are staying with in-laws and running the house with their economic and social support. Some of them (around 14%) are staying with their maternal family members.

2. Interpersonal relationships.

- Almost all of them shared that they have excellent relations with their children. Sometime it is very stressful to interact with these adolescent children.
- Many have spoiled the relationships with parents and in-laws and in some cases with siblings.
- It is shocking to note that some respondents have said that they do not have a single friend other than Shishuadhar group and look forward to relationship management skills.

F) Association with Shishuadhar

1 Age of association

Around 34% women are associated with Shishuadhar in last 3 years, 38% in 3-5 years and 28% are associated in last 6-10 years.

2. Regularity in attending programmes

- 85% attend program regularly.
- 15% can not attend programs organized by Shishuadhar due to professional commitments.

3. Opinion about Shishuadhar Association

Almost every one expressed the happiness of being associated with Shishuadhar. They have very much gratitude towards the organization. Shishuadhar has a special place in the heart of every mother as the relationship is beyond the financial aid or assistance. Children are always the apple of the eye of every mother and Shishuadhar is involved in the care and development their children certainly they feel protected and secure.

Their children also feel motivated and cared. Both children and mother feel the organization as part of family.

4. Suggestions for Shishuadhar

From the focused group discussion, we found they wanted Shishuadar to organize more job training courses and social skills training. And they want some educational lectures or workshops for their adolescent children.

5. Possibilities

We discussed on possibilities as below;

Income generation skill training; upper domestic help skills such as how to use telephone, refrigerator, micro oven and washing machines for themselves, and office work skills and repairing electric appliances skills for their children. They also want manner and public speaking skill training for personality development. It may be good to set up some reward and recognition prize for motivating. Lecture series; mothers want their daughters to have sexuality education.

Since our objective is supporting the mothers' empowerment and independence, we feel we should encourage them to participate in decision making. Their participation in the programme planning will be good for the sustainability of activities and their independence.

Summary of the research

Baseline

1. Around 60 % of the mothers are under age group of 30-40 years.
2. Around 70% mothers are literate whereas 30% are illiterate. There is no connection between literacy level and choice of profession. Those who have completed school education also are working as domestic helpers.

3. Only 6% of mothers' monthly earning is more or at par with minimum wages specified by government. 94% mothers are underpaid as compared to workers in the organized sector.
4. Around 70% women are widows and are the sole bread winners for the family; some of them are staying either with their parents or in-laws.
5. Around 70% stay in own houses, 20% in rented accommodation.
6. Around 65% of families are having adolescent children.
7. Around 60% families are associated with Shishuadhar for last 5 years. This suggests entry of new families on board.

Pre-testing

1. Personal information–maximum respondents in the 30-35 age group, 42% are illiterate and 70% reported to have health problems.
2. Occupational information–42% mothers are working as domestic help, 35% have much more physical strain, around 30% did not report discomfort in spite of earning less than the minimum daily wages. Around 91% reported to have stress due to double burden.
3. Personality–50% of respondent have acquired decision making over a period of time, 25% do not possess the capacity. 60% are not confident of themselves and feeling of helplessness is quite strong. Self image is very low.
4. Parenting–finding it hard to give time for children and this is creating lot of guilt, they are not prepared to handle the changing situations as regards to their adolescent children and finding it difficult to manage them.
5. Relationships–52% are women headed families and they are finding it difficult to manage older children due to power position in the relationships especially with male children. They do not share cordial relationships with parents, in-laws and siblings, due to crisis situation and experiences, they are unable to look at interpersonal relationships objectively.
6. Association with Shishuadhar–they are quite happy to be associated with Shishuadhar and feel protected and cared. They are enjoying the programmes and hardly given suggestions for the quality of programme but have given different ideas especially about courses for their development.

Focused group discussion:

Respondents are happy about their association with Shishuadhar. They have freely shared many things, about their past and present life and future course of action. While talking to them, many interviewers felt that there are lot of insecurities and which can be handled in group sessions. Based on the inputs received as the pretest interviews, specific objectives for each activity / programme will be worked on and while the intervention programme are taking place, some of the indicators to be developed to observe the respondent and record the observations which will help to cross check their response in post test or will be used to support the post-test.

We will plan the next step of the project according to the outcome of the focus group discussions.

1 **Source: Labour Department, Government of Maharashtra.**

<http://www.paycheck.in/main/officialminimumwages/maharashtra> 2/Dec. 2010

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