

Helping destitute children

Vinimay Trust plans to start a hostel to help kids with money and manpower

PRIYA NAIR

IT'S often a small idea that sparks a big one. When a group of BARC scientists formed an informal group to help destitute children, they had no idea that they were helping these children to integrate with the world.

Vinimay Trust runs a transition hostel for under-privileged children in Kopar Khariane called the Smt Coomiben Babubhai Shah Tarun Sadan Hostel. This hostel was started in May 1999.

Says Atul Shah, one of the trustees, "There is no dearth of institutions for destitute children in this city. But instead of starting another one, we decided to help them with money and manpower. This what the Trust aims to achieve."

Vinimay works with destitute children in Chembur Children's Home for boys and Bal Kalyan Nagri for boys and

girls. Apart from providing food, clothing, educational and medical facilities, Vinimay also gives these children several opportunities to develop their social and interpersonal skills.

Shah says, "The boys leave the homes when they are 18 year olds. But not many of them have jobs, which pay them well. Some are forced to drop out of schools as they start working as apprentices while they are in the institutions."

He adds, "We felt the need to assure these boys that they will have a place to stay once they leave the home. A place where they can stay while they completed their studies or earned enough to live on their own."

This is how the transition hostel was built. Vinimay provides food and medical facilities and caters to the personal needs of the boys like clothing and footwear for three years.

At present there are 24 boys, of these three are working out of Mumbai.

Shah claims, "The first batch of seven boys left the hostel in May 2002, by which time they had around Rs 30-40,000 each as bank balances as well as steady jobs.

Shah says, "Our first preference is a job. In three years we want them to be independent. Most boys have problems adjusting to their new jobs, so our priority is to look for accommodative bosses rather than well-paying jobs."

Vinimay volunteers counsel the boys on financial matters like how to save and invest money. Shah says, "We spend around Rs 2,000 per boy. Those who earn between Rs 300 to 400 per month pay the trust around Rs 300 as a nominal charge. Those who earn less do not pay."

He adds, "Our main aim is that these children merge into

society and their children don't have to become destitutes. The idea is not to promote excellence but to raise the general average."

The first phase of the hostel is complete and has facilities like office, superintendent's quarters, kitchen, dining hall, living rooms to accommodate the boys and study room. The hostel will eventually have an area of 6,500 square feet to accommodate 50 boys.

Vinimay is looking for funds to complete the rest of the building. It is expected to cost around Rs 25 lakhs. On paying a donation, you could name any block which includes dining hall, study hall and recreation hall.

For details contact Vinimay Trust, A-14, Nirmala Niwas, near Deonar Depot, VN Purav Marg or call Venkataraman at 25578130

priya@mid-day.com