



# **A relentless pursuit of hope**

Annual Report 2024-2025

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# Message from the President

**Dear colleagues and partners,**

I write this message with deep gratitude and even deeper conviction. A relentless pursuit of hope is not just a theme. It is our daily discipline. It is our call to action. It is the energy that drives VIHAAN to protect vulnerable populations, provide healing for survivors, fight for justice, reintegrate survivors into society and push for meaningful reforms that challenge the very structures that allow exploitation to thrive.



Over the past year, we have deepened our efforts across all six programmes: Rescue, Care and Support, Legal Interventions, Strengthening the ecosystem, Education and child safety, and Skill development and livelihood generation. We have seen young survivors step into leadership, advocating for change. We have signed new partnerships with governments, corporate partners and educational institutions, all aligned by the shared belief that systems must work for the most vulnerable, not against them. We have witnessed policy dialogues turn into action plans. As a Board, we see these achievements as VIHAAN's work is gaining momentum across India.

People who are impacted by – as well as part of – VIHAAN are the beholders of hope, carriers of lived truth and architects of change. I am truly humbled by their extraordinary courage, clarity and conviction: vulnerable populations who have learnt to keep themselves safe and survivors who have chosen to rebuild their lives. VIHAAN continues to walk beside them each day - even for years - with partners, donors and supporters who continue to believe in our mission.

With every step forward, we are reminded of the long road ahead. Systemic change is not quick; it requires persistence rooted in hope and courage. We are, and will continue to be, relentless in our pursuit of a world where trafficking becomes a rarity, vulnerable and survivors thrive and systems evolve to protect and uphold the dignity of every human being. Every victory, no matter how small, is a testament to the enduring hope of each one of us. We are truly grateful to all who journey with us.

**Best regards,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sriparna' followed by a stylized flourish.

**Sriparna Ganguly Chaudhuri**  
**President of the Board, VIHAAN**

# Message from our CEO

**Dear colleagues and partners,**

Every time I reflect on our journey, I am reminded of a child waiting to be found, a young woman reclaiming her voice and a survivor daring to dream again. This year, our theme, A Relentless Pursuit of Hope is the lifeblood of our work. It is an act of courage, an ardent purpose and an unwavering resolve.



Over the years of working with vulnerable populations and survivors, we have witnessed hope in the quiet courage of a survivor who speaks her truth, the sheer determination of our team walking into unsafe places so victims can find safety and the joyful tears of a young girl who broke cultural and economic barriers and took a first step into the world of dignified work.

This year's pursuit has led us into some of the darkest corners: brothels and building sites, locked rooms and legal hearings, overcrowded urban slums and overlooked rural villages.

We worked with survivors, families, educators, community leaders and government officials to build a chain of hope and protection strong enough to withstand the threats that too many children, young girls and women still face. Alongside police teams, we stepped into unsafe spaces and rescued children and young women from traffickers.

Across our Centres for Community Empowerment, safe spaces for young girls, skill development units, and survivor networks, our approach remained unwavering: survivor-centred, system-focused, and deeply rooted in dignity.

We equipped hundreds of community members with the knowledge and tools to spot the earliest signs of trafficking and abuse. Through awareness sessions in schools, we created awareness and built a culture of protection from human trafficking, child sexual abuse and other forms of abuse and exploitation.

This journey has only been possible because of you - our donors, partners and supporters. Your belief in our mission helped turn rescues into recoveries, programmes into protection networks, and ideas into lasting impact. You gave more than resources - you gave hope.

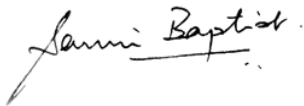


As we celebrate these milestones, we remain profoundly aware of the work still ahead.

As you read through this report, you will encounter stories of heartbreak and healing, as well as systemic gaps and bold interventions. But more than anything, I hope you will see what we see with an unshakeable belief that hope, when relentlessly pursued, becomes transformation.

With humility, determination, and grit, let us work together to make human trafficking a rarity.

**With deepest gratitude,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samir Baptist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

**Samir Baptist**  
**Chief Executive Officer - VIHAAN**





**About us**

## Vision

Our vision is to create a world free from abuse and exploitation, where every person lives with dignity.



## Mission

Our mission is to facilitate protection of vulnerable women and children from situations of human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation by empowering them through care, quality education, livelihood opportunities, access to justice and collaborative action, enabling the creation of a resilient and sustainable society.

## On a relentless pursuit of hope for 12 years

VIHAAN – meaning ray of light or the dawn in Sanskrit – stands for hope and freedom for vulnerable and victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, domestic servitude and beggary. For these individuals who are pushed onto the edge of life, even the idea of ‘hope’ feels distant, irrelevant or cruel. They are defenceless. The forgotten. The ones whose lives have been shaped by systemic neglect, abuse, and exploitation. We extend our hand encouraging each one to hold on and lead them to fulfil their dream of a dignified and empowered life.

Every effort of VIHAAN is rooted in hope and the interest of each beneficiary is at the heart of all we do with and for them. Over the last 12 years we have relentlessly strived to establish a comprehensive, multifaceted and long-term process to support our beneficiaries to honour their strength, rebuild their lives and empower them to reclaim their position in mainstream society.

It is a journey of hope, courage and survival.

Before VIHAAN	After VIHAAN
Vulnerable adolescent girls were discouraged due to low academic levels and disassociate from formal education system.	Girls brim with confidence and look forward to a bright future with regular academic support, life skill education, career counselling and awareness building on child protection issues.
Vulnerable and survivors were excluded from mainstream society, disempowered and denied access to opportunities.	Trainees can stand up for themselves with VIHAAN's industry-oriented skill training, earn an income and lead an empowered and dignified life.
Victims were trapped and exploited as sex slaves.	Survivors are removed from situations of exploitation and given the scope to lead a life of freedom and honour.
Victims were denied the right to rehabilitation and pushed into being re-victimised.	Survivors are supported on the path of holistic reintegration through long-term care and support services making them economically, socially and emotionally independent.
Victims lacked awareness, faced stigma and had inadequate institutional support to investigate and prosecute their cases and were denied their legal right.	Survivors are empowered to participate in the prosecution of traffickers and reclaim their rights to justice and fair compensation.
Low priority to incidences of abuse and exploitation of women and children leads to aggravation of crime.	Stakeholders are capacitated and supported to take collective action to address the issue of human trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation.



# Why VIHAAN exists?



## Prevalence of human trafficking and child sexual abuse

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transfer or obtaining of an individual through coercion, abduction, fraud or force to exploit them for profit. It is a modern-day form of slavery which grievously violates basic human rights of nearly 50 million people worldwide who are compelled to exist as slaves[1].

India, with around 8 million people living as slaves, is among the top ten countries with the largest estimated absolute number of people in modern slavery[2]. The most prevalent sectors employing trafficked people include forced labour, sex trade, domestic servitude, illegal adoption, forced marriages, illegal organ harvesting and agricultural slavery among others. With a high prevalence of slavery in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Nepal among others, India has become more vulnerable to cross-border trafficking incidences.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) includes an array of sexual activities like fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, exhibitionism, involving a child in prostitution or pornography, or online child luring by cyber-predators. Due to socio-cultural traditions and the sensitive nature of the issues, the incidence of CSA often goes unreported, as a culture of privacy, fear of indignity, and social humiliation prevails[3].

## Survivors' access to justice in human trafficking and child sexual abuse cases

Globally, the conviction rate in human trafficking and child sexual abuse cases is dismal. In 2022, only 5,600 human traffickers were convicted worldwide. This is a small increase of around 300 convictions from the year before. Still, the level of convictions is much lower than in the years before COVID-19[4]. In child sexual abuse cases, arrests were made only in 29% of cases and the conviction rate is as low as 14%[5].

[1] <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/50-million-people-worldwide-modern-slavery-0>

[2] <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/resources/downloads/>

[3] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8445113/>

[4] Statista Research Department. (2021) Number of convictions of human trafficking worldwide 2007-2020. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/459622/number-of-convictions-related-to-human-trafficking-worldwide/>

[5] Ibid



# Our theory of change



## Impact:

- Reduction in prevalence of trafficking in 'At Risk' communities.
- An integrated well-functioning criminal justice system.
- Strengthened institutional capacities providing better standards of care and protection to survivors.

## Outcomes

- Reduction in school dropouts
- Higher educational levels
- Job placement and financial independence
- Attainment of justice & deterrence to the criminal network
- Mainstreaming of survivors to lead a life of dignity
- Robust safety net at the community level

## Solutions

- Education and child safety
- Skill development
- Livelihood opportunities
- Criminal network mapping
- Rescue operations
- Trauma healing and psycho-social Support
- Education and vocational Training
- Alternative livelihood
- Access to justice and fair compensation
- Capacity building
- Public-private convergence
- Community awareness

## End-to-end approach

- Empowering the vulnerable
- Removing victims from situations of abuse and exploitation
- Caring, protecting and reintegrating survivors
- Building networks and partnerships with influencers and duty bearers for collective response

## Primary stakeholder:

- Victims or vulnerable (10 - 24 years)

## Agents of change:

- Govt. agencies, Judiciary, Law Enforcement, Non-governmental organizations, Families of victims/vulnerable, Local community, Private Sector/Corporates

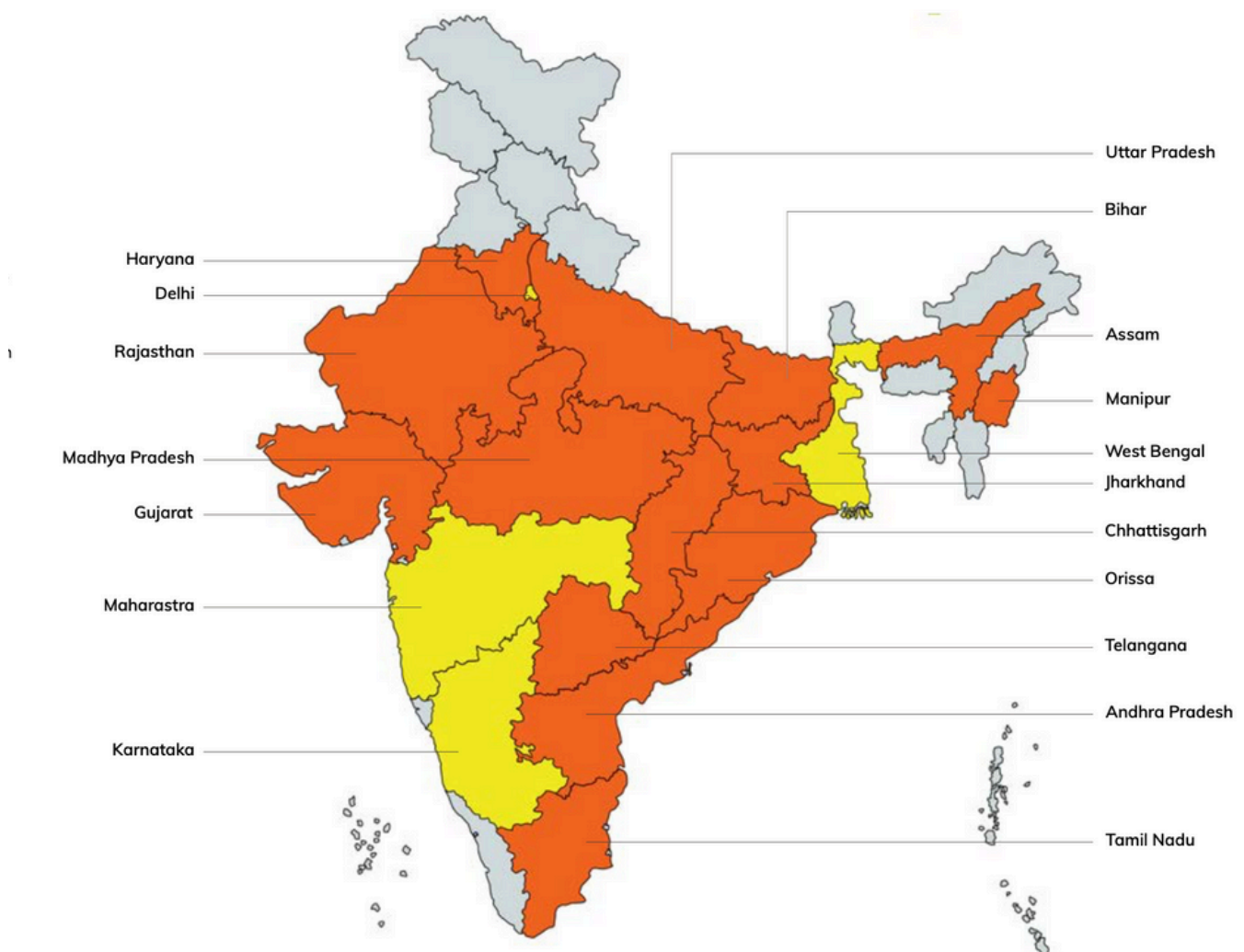
## Problem:

- Increase in situations of human trafficking, abuse and exploitation.
- Drivers increasing vulnerability for women and children: Lack of livelihood opportunities, poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness.
- Lack of integrated and systemic strengthening of institutions for increasing deterrence.
- Low quality survivor reintegration mechanisms.

# Where we work



Currently, we have a direct presence in Bengaluru and Belgaum (Karnataka), Delhi, Kolkata, North and South 24 Parganas (West Bengal) and Mumbai (Maharashtra). Our casework and capacity building programmes lead us to intervene across other states in the country. We have had interventions in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Daman, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.







**Our programmes  
and impact**



# Our programmes and impact



Our core approach focuses on end-to-end intervention encompassing prevention, rescue, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals, families and communities affected by situations of human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation through setting up a multi-disciplinary unit, building networks and collaborating with partners and generating scientific evidence to effectively tackle human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation.



We have developed six unique programmes to address the root causes of trafficking and empower stakeholders, bringing new ideas and innovations to advocate and eradicate the crime:



### **Rescue**

Rescuing victims from situations of human trafficking in collaboration with law enforcement



### **Care and support**

Caring for and protecting survivors of human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation to facilitate their rehabilitation, restoration and reintegration



### **Legal interventions**

Prosecuting the accused and securing justice for the survivors through legal support



### **Strengthen the ecosystem**

Strengthening the ecosystem by building networks and partnerships for a collective response, training frontline workers at the grassroots level to create a safety net and capacitating and activating vigilant bodies



### **Education and child safety**

Preventing human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation by promoting education and reducing drop-outs among the adolescent girls in the age group of 13 – 18 years (7th to 10th standard) by setting up centres for community empowerment.



### **Skill development and livelihood generation**

Empowering the vulnerable and survivors through skill training and livelihood generation in shelter homes and high-risk communities



## 2024-2025

### By the numbers



**37**

girls removed from situations of sex trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation.

**6**

survivors of sex trafficking were repatriated to Bangladesh and Nigeria.

**133**

survivors of sex trafficking, child sexual abuse and domestic servitude were

supported in education/skill training, physical and mental health care, restoration/ repatriation to their families, access to justice and victim compensation and linkage to job opportunities making them economically, socially and emotionally independent and reintegrated into society.

**178**

legal cases were supported in 2024-25, 29 accused were arrested and 15 accused convicted

and 11 survivors were awarded victim compensation amounting to INR

**30,69,500**

**6,711**

stakeholders including law enforcement

personnel trained through

**77**

training programmes.

**100**

first-generation learners have been regularized in school and provided academic support.

**450**

vulnerable girls and survivors of human trafficking, abuse and exploitation have been enrolled in skill training,

**146**

girls have been connected to livelihood opportunities

## Meet Sumi

Sumi\* is a survivor of sex trafficking. Her story is in many ways typical of the countless thousands of vulnerable young girls who are targeted, groomed, manipulated, dehumanized and sold. Nevertheless, with the help of partners and supporters of VIHAAN, Sumi was rescued and doing her Master's in Social Work. This year, she interned at VIHAAN and is looking forward to continuing her journey in social work to help and support young girls like her once she completes her education.

### Sumi's story in her own words:


My adolescence made me the perfect target for trafficking. One of the biggest risk factors of victims which we do not quite often talk about is loneliness. My parents worked hard to ensure my sister and I had healthy food, a good education, and decent living. In their efforts to earn money – which I do not complain about, they hardly had any time to spend with me. I longed for their love and affection. My feelings of loneliness made me vulnerable and the more vulnerable you are, the more powerful traffickers become.

I came to know Soma through a friend when I was in college. She offered to help me to make some extra cash to help support my family. I thought that my parents need not work so hard and they would have time to spend with me. Since I was so desperate for love and affection, I became a victim of trafficking. I had no idea that I was groomed and would be forced to have sex with many men every single day.

Once it started, things spiralled out very quickly. My trafficker controlled everything in my life – what I ate, what clothing I wore, how many customers I needed to entertain, how much would I be paid for each engagement and what not. I do not know how many times I have stood naked in front of men or how many times I was raped during my exploitation.

Things that happened on 21 March 2018 are still fresh in my mind – in a good way! The Central Investigation Department (CID) learnt about the prostitution ring. I was glad that the police along with the people of VIHAAN (which I did not know then) came to my rescue. I thought that these people would help me break free and start to rebuild my life.

However, I was in constant fear. But now I can say that it was a day of hope and a new beginning for me – and some other girls too.



The tireless work of advocates also helped me to receive a compensation of INR 2,00,000 which sparked my hope to pursue a Master's in Social Work. I got good grades in my Bachelor's degree, and I enrolled for a Master's degree. If something good happens in life, I have witnessed that it was people of VIHAAN who are more joyful than me. It is a tremendous grace to have people like you in one's life.

I have completed my first year of Master's in Social Work. Once I finish my education, I want to become the voice for all girls who have lost hope and are trapped in human trafficking. My internship at VIHAAN has expanded my knowledge and opened new doors. I want to educate and empower girls about human trafficking and what kind of help is available to them so that they can make good decisions.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to VIHAAN and the whole team. You have nurtured and guided me since the day of my rescue. For the last six years, you have listened, cared and supported me. You were there when I needed you the most. Today, I am a well-respected student in my college and an advocate for vulnerable girls and survivors of trafficking.

I will always be grateful to VIHAAN. I feel blessed to have VIHAAN in my life.



## Rescue

### Rescuing victims from situations of human trafficking in collaboration with law enforcement

Sex trafficking is a growing threat to both, the liberty and security of girls and their parents and families[8]. With the increasing demand for virgins in the sex trade, the age of children trafficked for sexual exploitation has been lowered over the years. Fake documents are often used to camouflage their age[9]. It is estimated that over two million women and children are trafficked for sex in the red-light districts in India[10]. The majority of the young girls are sourced from remote areas of India and neighbouring countries and transported to active destination points.

With time, new and innovative techniques are being used to lure victims to sex trafficking. Befriending the victim on social media like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp is a common form of recruitment. Making random calls to the victim and 'making to appear' as a cross connection is another technique to reach out to the girls, build a relationship and traffic her on the pretext of marriage. It has been reported that sometimes agents track girls through mobile recharge shops.

Public transport is mostly used to transport the victims from source to destination. Sedatives are given to the victims to prevent them from raising an alarm. Once the victim reaches the destination, violence is integral to sex trafficking. The moment a victim realizes that she has been duped and resists being forced into prostitution, violence begins in order to subjugate her.

[8] Goswami, I., Jithu, S.M., & Dsilva, N.R. (2021). A narrative study on the psycho-social impact of sex trafficking on victim's parents in the state of Karnataka. International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare. DOI 10.1108/IJHRH-10-2021-0189  
[9] Kendall, Virginia M.; Funk, Markus T. (2012). Child Exploitation and Trafficking: Examining the Global Challenges and US Response. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.  
[10] Willis, B.M. & Levy, B.S. (2002) Child Prostitution: Global Health Burden, Research Needs, and Interventions. The Lancet, 359: 1417-1422.  
<https://zenodo.org/record/1259781#ynFfgS2B3-Y>

**In 2024-25, 37 survivors were rescued/freed from situations of abuse and exploitation giving them hope for a dignified life free from bondage.**

- 12 victims of sex trafficking were rescued in 5 operations in collaboration with the state police in Kolkata and Bangalore
- 29 accused were arrested through the five rescue operations.
- 25 survivors of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse were received as referrals from the Governments of Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

## VIHAAN and the police come together for supporting the survivors of human trafficking

VIHAAN conducted a two-day training for 27 police officials of Barasat jurisdiction, on legal and psychosocial aspects to effectively respond to and handle the cases of survivors of human trafficking in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Centred on a survivor-led approach, the training offered insights into the minds of victims and focused on building trust and rapport, gathering information, supporting prosecution and minimising traumatising. On the legal front, we had covered steps involved in the repatriation of survivors of trafficking, the fundamental rights of survivors and laws related to human trafficking including the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

Within two weeks following this training, police officials led the rescue operation of two minor girls (aged 14 and 15) in Kolkata, West Bengal on 16 July 2024. VIHAAN assisted the Barasat police in the rescue operation and three accused were arrested. Girls were safely admitted at the shelter home basis the order given by the Child Welfare Committee, and our counsellors frequently visit them to provide healing support.

During the counselling session, the girls revealed an additional three names of the traffickers. Police quickly responded to our information and VIHAAN assisted in the arrest of three traffickers on 25 July 2024. Training our stakeholders, including police officials is part of our 'Strengthening the ecosystem' programme, which aims to strengthen the victim assistance responses to human trafficking, support cross-sector collaboration and build stakeholder capacity in identifying victims and connecting them to services.







## Care and support

**Caring and protecting survivors of human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation to facilitate their rehabilitation, restoration and reintegration**

Sex trafficking is one of the most violent crimes where victims are not only tortured physically but also broken emotionally. Traffickers often beat, rape and drug victims, deprive them of food and water, isolate them and threaten to murder them. Victims are forced to drink alcohol and tortured inhumanly into submission. They are tied up, raped, paraded naked and beaten with sticks, belts, burnt with cigarette butts, harmed with sharp objects, locked up in a dark room and denied food to eat till they accept the demands. The purpose is to instill fear in the minds of the girls so that they do not think of escaping[11]. Unknown places, language barriers and altering names and identities further isolate and confine the victims.

Hormone tablets and injections are often used to hide their actual age and make them more attractive to customers. The victims are compelled to survive in bondage. Their movements are restricted. Their hellish existence in small dingy rooms in deplorable and unhygienic living conditions is painstaking.

**During the reporting period,**

- **133 survivors of sex trafficking, child sexual abuse and domestic servitude were supported towards reintegration under the care and support programme**
- **13 survivors were provided medical support and facilitated hospital visits.**
- **31 survivors were supported to continue their education and/or vocational training**
- **58 survivors participated in 167 one-to-one counselling sessions to help them cope with the trauma**
- **The survivors were followed up physically or over the phone 1,107 times during the reporting period to map their progress and well-being.**

[11] Aston, J., Wen, J., Goh, E. & Maurer, O. (2021). Promoting awareness of sex trafficking in tourism and hospitality. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research. DOI 10.1108/IJCTHR-01-2020-0032

The majority having no access to banking services and tend to be cheated of money leaving them penniless and at the mercy of pimps and traffickers. According to the TISS report (2019)[12], a new trend is emerging where the traffickers send post-mortem reports and photographs showing the death of the victims as evidence to inform the family that the victim had died so that no efforts are taken to search for them.

Therefore, not merely rescuing, but supporting the survivor's reintegration into society has always been a top priority for us. Over the years, we have instituted comprehensive and sustained reintegration efforts through multi-faceted and long-term processes in order to prevent re-victimisation and enable survivors to rebuild their lives. We have steadfastly stood beside the survivors and gradually instilled the DNA of hope which is snatched away from them. It often takes years to reinstate their trust in humanity and help them adjust to life in mainstream society.

The primary objective of this program is to provide care and support to survivors of human trafficking and child sexual abuse to facilitate their physical, emotional, psychological and social well-being and lead to their reintegration.

[12]Tata Institute of Social Sciences (2019) Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Districts of India. National Report. Mumbai: Author.

**A Survivors' Meet, Euphoria 2025, was organised in Delhi, on 29 March 2025. The event was attended by 47 participants including 18 survivors, their parents and other guests. The Meet focused on trauma care and mental health well-being. Various educative sessions and fun activities were organised for the participants in this whole day programme.**



## **From exploitation to empowerment: Rimpi's journey to independence**

Rimpi's life took a drastic turn when she was forced into marriage at the tender age of 15 to a physically challenged man. Despite her desire to study, she found herself trapped in a cycle of poverty and exploitation.

After becoming a mother, Rimpi's responsibilities multiplied. Her husband's accident left him unable to work, and Rimpi was forced to take on the role of breadwinner. She worked tirelessly as a house help, facing long hours and irregular pay.

Lured by false promises of easy money, Rimpi was coerced into the sex trade. Fear and blackmail held her captive, and she was forced to continue in this exploitative situation.

Rimpi's life changed forever when she was rescued by our team and sent to a Child Care Institution (CCI) for rehabilitation. At the CCI, Rimpi was reintroduced to education, learning to read and write in her local language. She also discovered new skills in art, craft, stitching and karate.

After returning home, Rimpi was determined to build a better life for herself and her child. With VIHAAN's support, she secured a job at S&IB Services Private Limited as a housekeeping staff member. Rimpi's hard work and determination paid off, and she started her new role in March 2025.

Rimpi's journey is a testament to her resilience and determination. From exploitation to empowerment, Rimpi has broken free from the shackles of poverty and abuse. As she celebrates her 18th birthday, Rimpi is ready to take on the world, armed with newfound confidence and a brighter future.

VIHAAN is proud to have played a part in Rimpi's journey, providing her with the support and resources she needed to reclaim her life. We celebrate Rimpi's success and look forward to witnessing her continued growth and empowerment.



## Legal interventions

### Prosecuting the accused and securing justice for the survivors through legal support

Ambiguities, backlog of cases and external influences have weakened the legal framework and delayed timely justice for victims. Access to justice to survivors for trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation are often laden with challenges. Majority of the victims and their families never approached the police to file any cases. Few feared that the police would harass them with false cases. Due to lengthy processes in court and lack of evidence, the credibility of the cases diminished. In many instances, the victims did not want their families to know about their ordeal and shied away from pursuing the case. Their right to victim compensation is often denied.

The objective of this programme is to provide legal support to survivors to protect their right to justice and link them to the government victim compensation schemes as a step to their effective rehabilitation and reintegration. The role of the advocates associated with VIHAAN begins in the pre-rescue period as they help network with external stakeholders. During the rescue, they assist the police in filing the First Information Report and complete all other legal formalities in a hassle-free manner. Post-rescue, they support in applying for victim compensation, oppose bail by supporting the Assistant Public Prosecutor and Investigating Officer and if needed, use an appellate mechanism to file a revisional application in a higher court.

- 178 legal cases were supported during the reporting period
- The arrest of 29 accused was facilitated during the reporting period as part of the five rescue operations undertaken.
- As on 31 March 2025, 164 accused were in judicial custody in legal cases being followed up by the legal team. The legal team successfully facilitated bail denial in 139 applications filed by the accused (90% bails denied). This is an important milestone because bail of the accused results in delays of legal proceedings and timely denial of justice to the survivors.
- The legal team recorded 1,290 court appearances to follow-up the cases regularly in the court of law.
- 115 witnesses were supported and protected by the VIHAAN legal team to facilitate them to record their evidence in court without any threat, in a safe environment.
- With diligent follow-up, an order for the award of victim compensation was received by 7 survivors amounting to INR 26,87,500, and 4 survivors received victim compensation money amounting to INR 3,82,000, in their bank accounts.
- Seven conviction orders were received and 15 accused were convicted with an average of 10 years' imprisonment.

## Securing the right to fair justice

Just a day after we celebrated the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, our strive to make trafficking a rarity became a reality when on 31 July 2024 the Diamond Harbour Court in West Bengal passed a final judgement of conviction against all five accused in a child sex trafficking case. While two accused were convicted for 10 years, three others were ordered life imprisonment. Rabiya was awarded a compensation of INR 3,00,000 to help rebuild her life.

It was a momentous moment for all of us in VIHAAN as it was no ordinary case. The case was filed in 2021 and since then there has been tremendous pressure on the victim's family to withdraw the matter. At one point, the life risk was so high that the parents were ready to compromise, it was only on Rabiya's persistence that VIHAAN continued to pursue the matter. She wanted justice and was not ready to back out under any circumstance.

Rabiya was recruited by her brother-in-law and trafficked from West Bengal to Maharashtra. Moved across cities, physically abused, sexually assaulted, raped, drugged and forced to prostitute. She was rescued by the local police, in 2021, during an operation and restored to her family in West Bengal. Her legal case was referred to us by our Mumbai-based partner organisation.



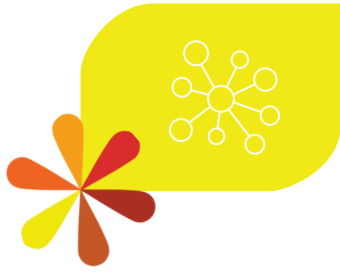
## When the protector turns perpetrator

Going through the legal process is difficult, especially for a child when a protector becomes the abuser, but as the accused is prosecuted, justice is served and faith in humanity remains!

Ria was eight years old when she was raped by her older brother who was 18 years old. The sole eye-witness in the case was her other brother who entered the house during the act and stopped the crime. The case was referred to VIHAAN by the Child Welfare Committee in 2022, two years after occurrence of the incident. It took a lot of dedicated efforts from the team to build rapport with the survivor and counsel her to testify against the accused. It was difficult for Ria to take a stand against her own brother. But she recorded her testimony bravely. Ria was only 3 years old when her mother passed away and she was left in the care of her two elder brothers. She stated that her brother had been assaulting her repeatedly since a very early age. He also assaulted her physically and used to hit her during the rape. He also threatened her that he would kill her if she would reveal the incident to anyone.

In November 2024, the judge found the accused guilty and convicted him for aggravated penetrative sexual assault under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, under Section 376 and 506 of the Indian Penal Code 1860 for the offence of rape and criminal intimidation and awarded 20 years' imprisonment. Ria received final compensation order for INR 10.5 lakh.

Ria is currently studying in 9<sup>th</sup> standard and stays in a child care institution.



## Strengthening the ecosystem

**Strengthening the ecosystem by building networks and partnerships for a collective response, training frontline workers at the grassroots level to create a safety net and capacitating and activating vigilant bodies**

VIHAAN has been steadily developing partnerships and networking with government stakeholders on various projects and research initiatives as part of state committees and networking groups building a collaborative front to combat and prevent human trafficking. In 2024-25, 6,711 stakeholders including law enforcement personnel, judiciary officials, shelter home staff, college students and teachers and partner NGOs, among others have been trained through 77 training programmes.

### Empanelled Trainer of Karnataka State Police



Training at Police Training School, Aimangala of 24 Police Sub-Inspectors, Asst. Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables to sensitise them on legislations relating to crimes against children and human trafficking.



Training at Police Training School, Aimangala of 80 Police Sub-Inspectors, Asst. Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables to facilitate an understanding on child protection, legislations to address crimes against children and human trafficking.

## VIHAAN, a preferred partner for the Safe City Project in Bengaluru

We have been chosen as an NGO partner for the Bengaluru Safe City Project, an initiative by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, to ensure the safety of women in the city.

In partnership with the National Law University of India, we have facilitated 34 workshops and training sessions for over 3,850 police personnel of the city to equip them with knowledge and skills to handle and respond to gender-based violence cases. The attendees included police constables, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, and personnel from both law and order and traffic departments. The workshops covered various topics, including gender and power dynamics, relevant legislation and effective communication techniques.

In the coming year, VIHAAN will also play a crucial role in the Active Bystander Program, which aims to empower citizens to identify and report incidents of violence against women, transgenders and children. In close collaboration with the Bengaluru city police, we will organise public awareness programmes to educate them on how to recognise signs of violence and take appropriate action as well as the prevention and redressal tools available.



## **Celebrating the results of partnerships together with the Central Crime Branch**

In July 2024, the VIHAAN team in Bengaluru assisted the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police and KG Halli police in the rescue operation of two young girls and the arrest of two accused.

Our learnings during this rescue operation combined with training programmes for the police officials have led to a more significant rescue operation in September 2024. This rescue operation resulted in the rescue of 15 African women, who came to India to look for work but were forced into prostitution due to financial difficulties and expired visas.

We assisted the police with post-rescue formalities, including medical assessments and initial counselling sessions, and now the women are safely residing in shelter homes.

Working side by side with the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police in Bengaluru has strengthened our relationship, and we jointly celebrate the results our partnerships bring for the victims and survivors of human trafficking.





## Education and child safety

### Preventing human trafficking by promoting education among the adolescents

Education is a transformative tool which enables every girl to break free from the shackles of gender discrimination and enjoy an equal future. VIHAAN, through educational support, gives hope to every vulnerable adolescent girl to acquire knowledge, develop their personality and pave a pathway to social equity.

Towards fulfilling our goal of 100% retention and improved academic outcomes, in 2024-25, VIHAAN has set up five Centres for Community Empowerment in West Bengal, Karnataka and Delhi supporting 100 first-generation learners. Each Centre accommodated 25 students (Class VII to X) and one teacher. Classes were conducted for two hours from Monday to Friday in Communicative English, Digital Literacy, Life Skill Education and Awareness Generation of Child Protection. The progress of the students was communicated to their parents through meetings. Home visits to follow-up on the absentees and community mobilisation exercises were undertaken periodically to ensure the buy-in of the community in the education of girl children.





## Brishti's journey of hope with VIHAAN in Delhi

Brishti is a 12 years old girl attending academic classes at VIHAAN's community empowerment centre in Delhi.

A year ago, Brishti moved from a quiet village near Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh where she lived with her grandparents and her two siblings. Family circumstances forced Brishti and her siblings to leave their grandparents' home and join their parents in Delhi.

The siblings started living in a small tinned roof room in one of the largest urban slums of Delhi where VIHAAN has been running a Centre for Community Empowerment for the past 2 years. During one of the community walks, the social worker saw Brishti at home on a school day. Upon enquiring, it was revealed that after relocating to Delhi, Brishti could not get admission in school.

Brishti's mother works as a domestic help. Her father struggles to find consistent work. With a family income of just INR 8,000 a month, education took a back seat.

With the social worker's support, Brishti was enrolled at VIHAAN's Community Empowerment Centre where she attended Communicative English and Digital Literacy classes. VIHAAN's team worked with the family and helped Brishti to secure admission in one of the local government schools in Standard 6 in a new academic year. She is now attending the Centre for Community Empowerment regularly and has improved significantly in both subjects.

VIHAAN ensures that hope walks in even in the quiet corners and forgotten places. For us, hope is not an idea. It is a journey and we walk together with our beneficiaries.





## Skill development and livelihood generation

### **Empowering the vulnerable and survivors through skill training and livelihood generation in shelter homes and high-risk communities**

Our skill training beneficiaries belong to families who survive in extremely vulnerable and deprived socio-economic conditions, struggling for their livelihood. The majority being migrants or displaced, do not possess proper documentary proof and are deprived of accessing their rights, entitlements, and provisions from government social security schemes. Perennial problems like irregular employment, insufficient income, hazardous nature of employment/job, ill health etc, plague the communities. Due to the erratic nature of work among parents, children and young adults in these areas are often left without supervision of elders leading to their school dropout and increased susceptibility to addiction, abuse and exploitation. The skill training programme gives our beneficiaries the hope to dream beyond the chaotic everyday life. They are trained and prepared to join the white collar workforce which for most are mere figments of imagination.

In 2024-25, under this programme, VIHAAN operated Centres for Community Empowerment at six locations namely Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Delhi, South 24 Parganas in West Bengal and Belgaum in Karnataka. The centres provided 450 survivors of human trafficking, abuse and exploitation and other vulnerable girls access to foundation, transferable and technical skills training, and support in gaining real and meaningful employment.

Our social workers guided them to make the right choice amongst varied training opportunities that include fashion designing, embroidery, tailoring, hospitality management and customer service. After the training, we ensured the involvement of major employers for internships/apprenticeships which acted as an avenue for the trainees to get into the market. We placed 146 girls in employment, helped them achieve economic independence and gave them an opportunity to explore life beyond the walls of exclusion and marginalisation.

## A walk into corporate life...

The reporting officer of Ruksar\*, one of the girls who have graduated skill training programme at VIHAAN and placed at Mc Donalds shared,

“Initially Ruksar was shy and had difficulty to adjust to the new environment. But soon she picked up and completed part-time trainee role in just two weeks and now promoted to part-time crew, she is a calm, hardworking and dedicated worker and an asset to the organisation.”

Like many young girls in Ruksar's neighbourhood, Ruksar's dreams were quietly shelved within the walls of her home in Mumbai. She had completed her higher secondary exams, but stayed indoors, unsure of what the future held. That was when she came to know about VIHAAN's Skill Training Programme and her life began to change.

Ruksar was very keen to work when she received the job offer from Mc Donalds but her father was reluctant to allow her to go outside the home and work. With extensive counselling by our social worker and trainer, he finally said yes.

Ruksar is very happy at the new workplace and looks forward to a bright future. Because sometimes, all a girl needs is someone to walk the first few steps with her. And, VIHAAN always walks with them.



## An entrepreneurial initiative in rural West Bengal

Ten trainees from Atghara, Baduria and North 24 Parganas, West Bengal were chosen on the basis of one-to-one interviews and the ones who seemed to be keen on taking up entrepreneurial measures. They were enrolled in the Foundation Course at Chetla and later supported with technical support through a session on entrepreneurship orientation followed by hands-on training on cookery through AG Vocational School.

The trainee team has opened an eatery named 'Opportunity Café' at Atghara where they sell a regular lunch menu and items like rolls, momos, soups etc., in the evening. The café has been registered as a cooperative. A one-time investment in cooking equipment was made to kick-start the operations.

Atghara is part of rural West Bengal, situated 60 kilometres away from Kolkata. Located in the heart of the market place, the eatery not only caters to the local people accessing the market and the workforce who are engaged in local manufacturing units, but also women. Women here are often subjected to mobility restrictions. Eating out in a restaurant is a rare practice for them in this locality. With word of mouth already doing the rounds, the café has set a precedent of women entrepreneurship and financial empowerment in the locality. It provides a safe space to women customers to sit at the café, enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, interact with others and exchange views, ideas and opinions. It has great potential to become a hub for women's liberalisation and empowerment.

Thanks to the support from donors like you, the café has been given a fresh new look and has become warmer, more welcoming, and customer-friendly. With the addition of a new refrigerator and mixer grinder, productivity has soared while keeping costs in check. The café has collaborated with a local NGO and supplies food and snack for their various programmes and events which helps to generate sustainable income.







**Measuring our  
progress**



VIHAAN has a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning system for the programme based on the Logical Framework Analysis. Our indicators are set at different levels to map the progress of our project towards its goal. Our project goals in turn feed into the organisational goal. To analyse whether the project is moving towards the desired goal, we monitor

- the activities to the outputs
- objectives to the outcomes
- goal to the impact

To regularly monitor the project and initiate course corrections whenever required, we undertake the following processes:

**1.Mapping of Monitoring Indicators:** We follow a detailed record keeping and documenting process for each activity. We map it to the output and outcome which is reviewed at regular frequency.

**2.Budget spend vs programme timeline:** We visit our budget versus spent on a regular basis to see how we are progressing through our project. It allows us to ensure that activities are going as per the proposed budget which checks under as well as over spending of funds.

**3.Evaluation studies:** Wherever applicable, the programme design also includes baseline and end-term studies. It helps to set benchmarks for activities as a starting point for the project. In addition, it builds the base against which monitoring indicators are set to assess the project's progress and effectiveness.

## **Case Management System**

The case management system on the Salesforce platform is at the core of our monitoring and evaluation process. It is a software designed to store, track and manage all programme-related data. For example, we monitor every survivors' progress from rescue to reintegration. We map all activities to fulfil desired objectives through in-depth planning, proper execution and regular dashboard review.



**Carriers of hope: In  
their own words**



“I was completely entrapped by this notorious group of people when you (VIHAAN) rescued me. I will always be grateful to you, didi (VIHAAN social worker). Actually, I really needed a job to support my family so my friend introduced me to another person who promised to help me find a job. Soon, I realised the true nature of the work. So, I refused but then they started blackmailing me with my nude photographs and videos. I was forced to prostitute for only 500 rupees per customer. Then, one day you (VIHAAN) came along with the police aunties and took me out of that rut. Today, with your support I am able to continue my education. Thank you so much.”

— Swati was rescued along with 4 other girls in a massive operation conducted by jointly West Bengal police and VIHAAN, in August 2024. Swati was only 15-year-old and studying in the tenth standard when she was trafficked by her neighbour on the pretext of a lucrative job and blackmailed into flesh trade. Now restored to her family, Swati is continuing her education. Our counsellors regularly conduct sessions with her to help cope with the trauma. On the legal front, the case is in court and Swati awaits to testify against her perpetrators in court.



“It is only with didi’s (VIHAAN’s social worker) support and encouragement that I am able to walk to school each day. I sometimes crossed paths with my traffickers and acquaintances who once looked at me as prey. But I no longer look away. I walk with my head held high and my eyes steady. I no longer flinch or run because I have already faced my worst fears—and won.”

— Paruli, a minor survivor of sex trafficking from Kolkata is now studying in Class XI. Her recruiters and traffickers are her neighbours living in the same locality.



“Hearing [Parveen’s] voice after six years was like a miracle come true. My parents are simple people who were tricked and [Parveen] was taken away from us and smuggled abroad. My parents have cried almost every day for the last six years remembering her. We never imagined we would see her again. Thank you so much for bringing her back.”

— Parveen’s older brother

Parveen, a native of Bangladesh, was studying in grade 7 when her maternal aunt on the pretext of taking the girl to Dhaka for a vacation trafficked her to Delhi. Parveen was forced into prostitution. She was referred to VIHAAN in 2023, after languishing in a shelter home for 5 years. With the support of the VIHAAN legal team and regular follow-up with concerned authorities, she was repatriated to Bangladesh on 10 July 2024 and united with her family.



“Computer to me was google search, Facebook and Instagram. I learnt from the classes about MS office – how to type content and prepare presentation. I was not at all aware about all of this.”

— Dipa, a candidate at the Community Empowerment Centre, Kolkata, West Bengal



“The program has been extremely beneficial for me. When I joined the training, I was an absolute fresher with little or no idea of any career prospects since I had dropped out of college. After joining the skilling program, I not only got a sense of direction in life but also managed to get a job.”

— Shamita from Chetla centre in Kolkata has been placed at Wow China for an annual pay package of INR 1,32,000 after completion of one month Foundation Course and three months of domain training



On behalf of the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Bengaluru Regional Centre, we extend our profound gratitude and sincere appreciation for your invaluable contribution as a resource agency for the training programs on "Women and Child Protection Issues."

The trainings, specifically designed for government stakeholders from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry, Kerala, and Goa, greatly benefited from your expertise. We are particularly grateful for your focused and insightful sessions on the critical issue of human trafficking. Your ability to share practical, field-level experiences on this complex subject was immensely impactful. The real-world perspectives and ground-level insights provided by Team Vihaan were crucial in enhancing the understanding of our participants, who are at the forefront of implementing protection measures in their respective states. Such practical knowledge is indispensable for effective intervention and prevention strategies.

The feedback received from the participating government stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the clarity, relevance, and actionable nature of the information you presented. Your dedication to raising awareness and building capacity in the fight against human trafficking is truly commendable.

We look forward to the possibility of future collaborations with Team VIHAAN as we continue our efforts to strengthen the protection mechanisms for women and children across the nation.

Dr. G. Jyothi  
Deputy Director  
NIPCCD, Regional Centre, Bengaluru





**Thank you, donors  
and partners**



## Our major donors

1. Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives Pvt.Ltd.
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# Financial highlights

# Balance sheet

Particulars	Note	As at March 31, 2025 Rs. in '000	As at March 31, 2024 Rs. in '000
<b>SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>			
Reserves and Surplus	3	28,392	33,114
Unspent Balance of Project Grants	4	22,901	19,292
Current Liabilities	5	643	924
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51,936</b>	<b>53,330</b>
<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>			
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant, Equipment and Intangible Assets	6	580	631
<b>Investments</b>	7	23,128	28,650
<b>Long-term Loans and Advances</b>	8	154	150
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Interest Accrued on Fixed Deposits	9	2,358	1,604
Cash and Cash Equivalents	10	24,949	21,561
Short-term Loans and Advances	11	767	734
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51,936</b>	<b>53,330</b>



# Income and expenditure account

Particulars	Note	For the Year Ended March 31, 2025	For the Year Ended March 31, 2024
		Rs. in '000	Rs. in '000
<b>INCOME</b>			
Grant and Donations	12	27,883	39,594
Other Income	13	3,405	2,304
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>31,288</b>	<b>41,898</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Programme Expenses	14	26,629	26,693
Depreciation and Amortisation Expense	6	60	180
Administrative Expenses	15	9,320	9,818
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>36,009</b>	<b>36,691</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>		<b>-4,721</b>	<b>5,207</b>

# Receipts and payments account

Particulars	For the Year Ended March 31, 2025 Rs. in '000	For the Year Ended March 31, 2024 Rs. in '000
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS (Opening Balance)</b>	<b>50,210</b>	<b>41,317</b>
Bank Balances	21,560	13,167
Fixed Deposits with Banks	28,650	28,150
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Grant and Donations	31,492	42,711
Interest and Other Income	2,279	2,266
Other Receipts	621	148
<b>Receipts During The Year</b>	<b>34,392</b>	<b>45,125</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>84,602</b>	<b>86,442</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
<b>Programme Expenses</b>		
Education & Child Protection	946	1,412
Skill Development and Livelihood	11,450	5,510
Rescue	2,167	4,636
Care and Support	4,385	4,883
Legal Intervention	6,499	6,207
Strengthening the Ecosystem	1,932	4,441
	<b>27,379</b>	<b>27,089</b>
Administrative Expenses	9,063	8,445
Purchase of Fixed Assets	9	426
Other Payments	73	272
<b>Expenses During The Year</b>	<b>36,524</b>	<b>36,232</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - Closing Balance</b>	<b>48,078</b>	<b>50,210</b>
Bank Balances	24,950	21,560
Fixed Deposits with Banks	23,128	28,650
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>84,602</b>	<b>86,442</b>

# A relentless pursuit of hope



To report a potential case of human trafficking, exploitation, bonded and child labour, or domestic servitude and beggary, please send an e-mail to [info@vihaan-wms.org](mailto:info@vihaan-wms.org)



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