

JULY 2019

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## A DECADE AFTER THEY WERE SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES

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Stories of what children are doing ten years after separation from families and  
being reunited with the efforts of SATHI NGO

**Society for Assistance to Children in Difficult Situation**

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[www.sathi-india.org](http://www.sathi-india.org)

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## 1. Introduction

Children run away from home for various reasons and arrive on India's major railway platforms every day. There are also children who lose their way or accidentally get separated from their family. These children are very vulnerable and there is a need to help them quickly. SATHI has been working with these children for the last 25 years and has been one of the pioneers in establishing reunification of runaway and separated children with their families as a norm in the sector.

It is a moment of great joy when a separated child reunites with his or her family. Many times, these are very emotional moments for both the child as well as parents. The 'tears' of joy that a mother sheds when she hugs her separated son fuels the team with motivation, to do more. Post reunification, there is a natural anxiety to check whether the children are continuing to stay at home with their families. To that extent, there is an institutionalized process of conducting telephonic follow-ups with restored children for up to 1 year after restoration on a quarterly basis. It is satisfying to know that in nearly 90% of the cases, children continue to stay back at home or in contact with their families after restoration.

What happens to children 10 years after restoration? Are they still with their families? How have they fared in life? Do they remember their experience of separation and reunification? In a unique endeavor, SATHI team decided to find out and undertook a study to follow-up on the status of children (now young adults), who were helped by the organization a decade earlier. Conducted in two phases, the study produced heart-warming results. Not only were most children staying back with families, they had turned out to be responsible individuals taking care of their families and doing well for themselves. The study team went in search of reunited children and met an Army-man, Insurance officer, Taxi fleet owner, Engineering teacher and many others who were now young and responsible citizens. And yes, they remembered the organization and their staff too.

This book is a compilation of 100 cases of reunited children and their statuses a decade after their reunification with families. Containing inspiring stories, nuggets and experiences, the booklet serves to underscore the immeasurable significance of timely rescue and reunification of runaway children with their families.

## 2. Brief overview of the study

### Study timeline

The study was conducted in 2 phases:

- A. The first part of the study was conducted in the year 2015-2016. During this period, we visited children who had been reunited from the southern zone in 2005-06. This included a total of 100 children reunited from the locations of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. 50 cases
- B. The second phase of the study was conducted in 2019. This time, the children conducted included those who were rescued from SATHI Kanpur. 50 house visits were conducted in this phase of the study.

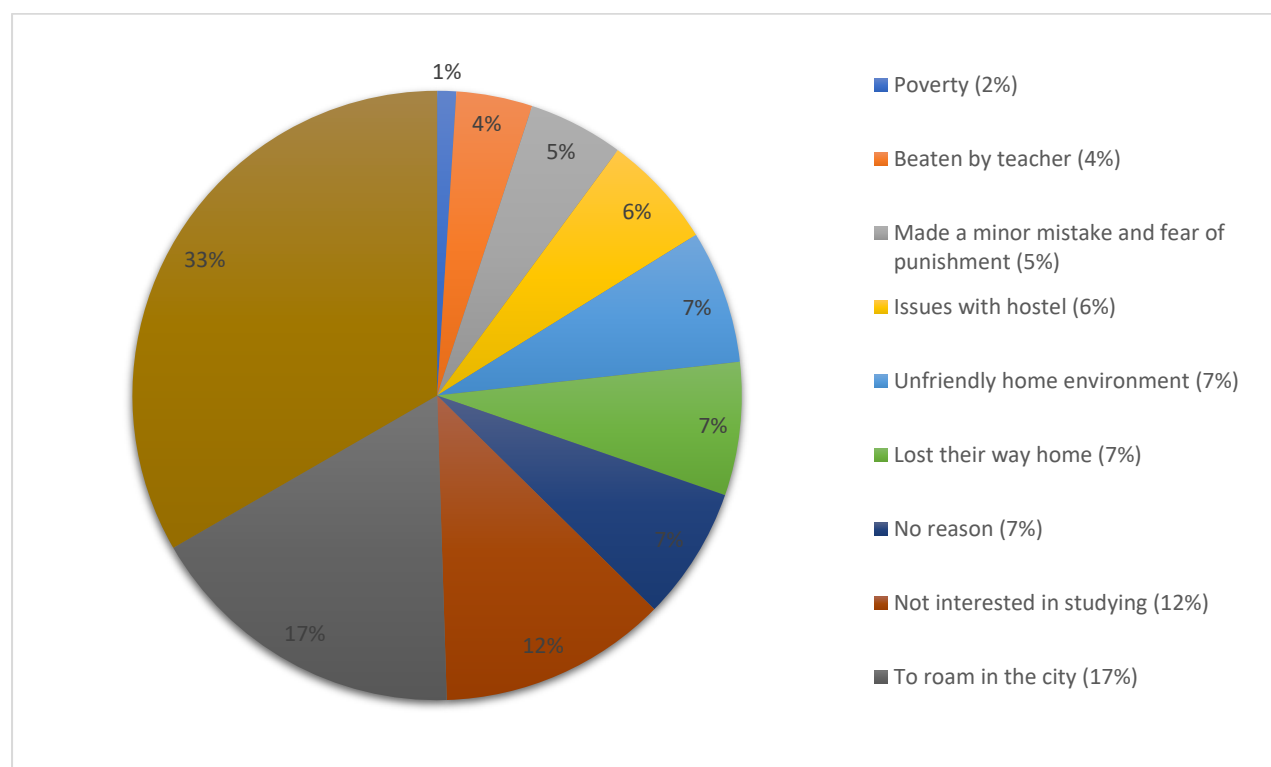
In both phases, the criteria for selection of children included the following:

- Children should have been reunited 10 years back. It is presumed that 10 years is a significantly long period to note changes in a person and his / her circumstances
- Those children were selected whose addresses were within 100 to 150 kms of SATHI project area for logistical convenience

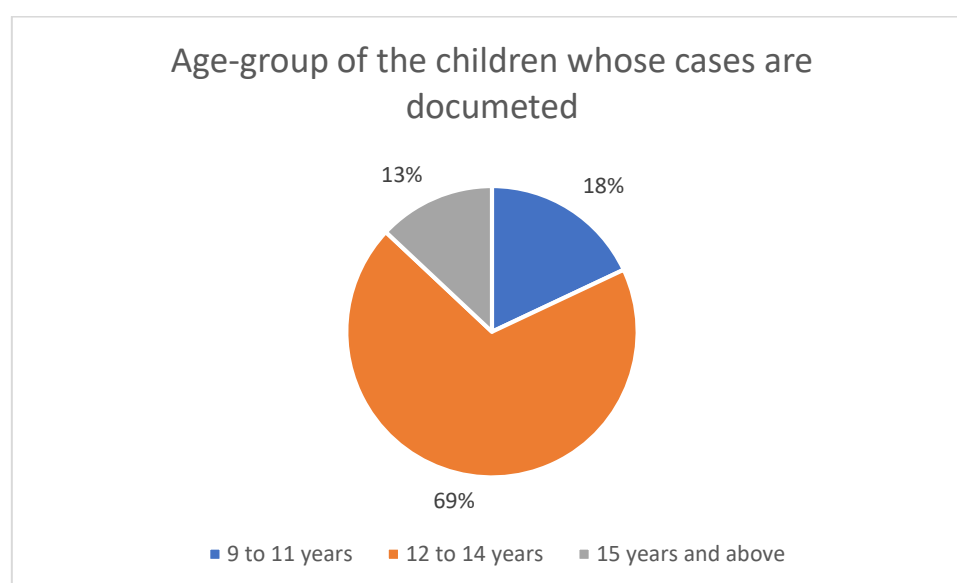
### 3. Findings from the study

#### Why did these children leave home?

Reasons for separation of the children were varied. It takes effort to build rapport with the children and engage with them to ascertain the reason for separation. Thankfully, in most cases, the reasons are not serious. The following chart gives a break-up of the reasons for separation among 150 cases selected in both phases of the study.



Majority of the children who land-up on railway stations are aged between 12 to 14. Among most of the cases selected for this booklet, ages of majority of the children at the time of being helped by SATHI is 12 to 14 years. The cases also include one 20-year old youth who was helped by SATHI.

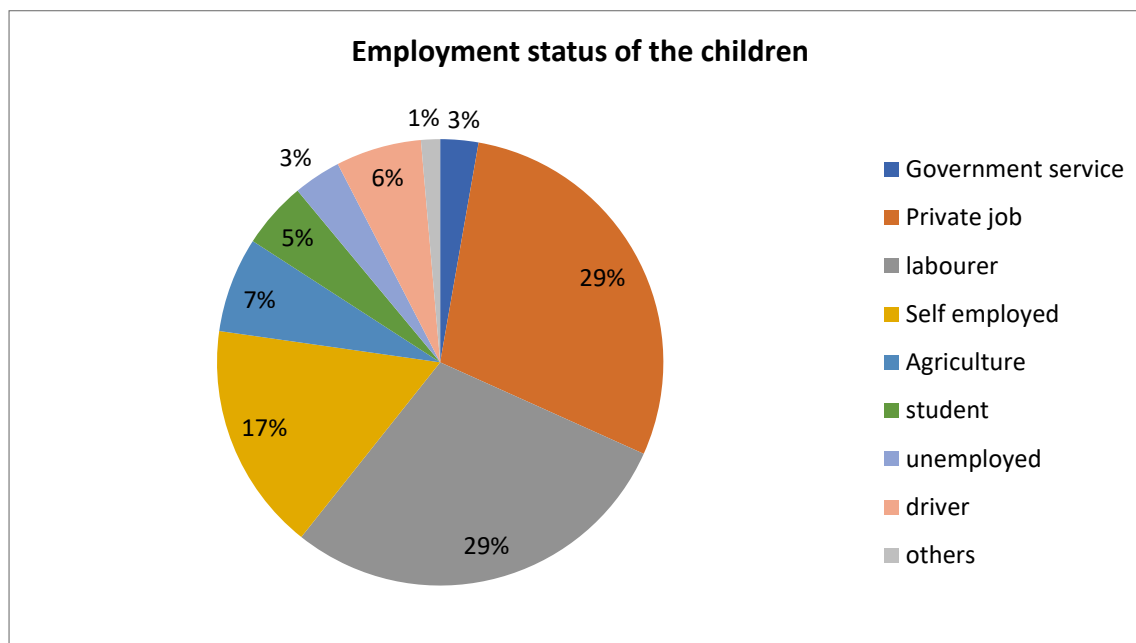


### Retention level of children

From the 150 children we reunited, unfortunately 2 children are no more. In the remaining 148 children, only 3 have runaway again whereas the rest 145 are still at home or in contact with family. A retention rate of 98% is not only exhilarating, but also a strong testimony to the fact that children can most certainly be reunited with their families.

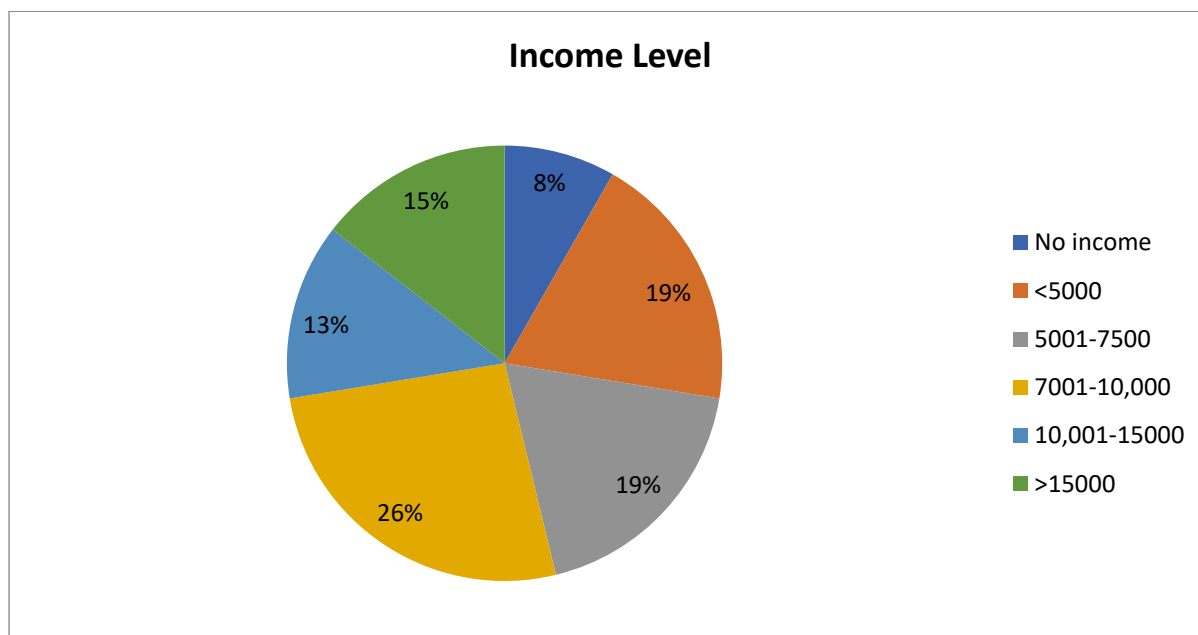
### Employment status

143 out of 148 children were working, indicating that the children have gone on to become responsible members of the family. The nature of employment varies from government service to private jobs to self-employment. The below graph shows the distribution of how the children, now young adults are employed



### Income levels

An analysis of the income levels of the children shows that about 15% of the children have income levels of greater than Rs. 15,000/- per month. At the other end of the spectrum, about 28% of the children earn less than Rs. 5,000/- per month and 8% have no incomes.



Some of the children with higher income levels are listed in the below table (along with their names and professions)

|     | NAME                | OCCUPATION                | MONTHLY INCOME |
|-----|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1.  | Ningangouda         | Taxi Owner                | 80,000         |
| 2.  | Raju N              | Painter                   | 30, 000        |
| 3.  | Srikant Lamani      | Disc Jockey               | 30, 000        |
| 4.  | Nageshwara Reddy    | Stone Business            | 20, 000        |
| 5.  | Venkateshwara Reddy | Auto Cad trainer          | 20, 000        |
| 6.  | Pradeep             | Construction Industry     | 18,000         |
| 7.  | Jalandhar           | Engineer in Army          | 30, 000        |
| 8.  | Ankit Yadav         | Travel agency in Malaysia | 25, 000        |
| 9.  | Aftaab              | Driver in Saudi Arabia    | 20, 000        |
| 10. | Vijay Kumar         | Electrician               | 20, 000        |

The above analyses show that children who have been reunited by SATHI are doing well. They have rebuilt their lives in the best possible way with the resources and support available to them.

In conclusion, we would like to say that it is now proven that home reunification is a sound practice. Our faith in home reunification and its efficacy has only increased after this study. We will continue our endeavour to contact children and reunify them with their families wherever possible.

## 4. 50 Case Studies from Home visits done in Karnataka, AP and Telangana

*These home visits were conducted in the year 2015-2016. These case studies have been written from the perspective of the child or a close relative and comprise information about why the child ran away, how they met SATHI, and what they are doing today.*

### 1. SATHI, My True Friend

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*Did you say you are from SATHI, Sir? I am very excited to meet you. I ran away from my home in Alabanur, Andhra Pradesh when I was 12 years old. I had stolen Rs 2,000, boarded a train and landed on Raichur platform. The railway platform became my home for the next 8 days.*

*I don't know how I spent those 8 days. It was not pleasant. On the 9th day, when I was roaming aimlessly on the platform, someone from SATHI approached me. He was very friendly and kind. I felt I could trust him and he took me to their shelter.*

*The shelter felt very safe and warm and we were fed good food. There were a few more kids who had run away from home. SATHI organised an orientation camp for us. We learnt yoga, meditation and did a bit of reading and writing. We also played plenty of games like cricket, kabaddi and carom.*

*The staff then counselled me and persuaded me to share my personal details. I realised what a mistake it was to run away from home. SATHI called my brother to Raichur, and Mr. Shankarappa from SATHI accompanied us home. My mother was inconsolable. The reunion was emotional.*

*A few years later, I learnt to drive a tractor and a jeep. I moved to Bengaluru and started driving a taxi. I have since worked with Ola and Uber cab services. Recently, I bought my own car. I am 23 years old now. I cannot imagine how my life would have turned out if I continued living on the platform.*

*My name is Ninganagouda Sivanagouda, and I cannot thank SATHI enough for persuading me to return home. I still have the photograph we took during the reunion. I would love to drop in at your office in Bengaluru soon, Sir.*

### 2. From Platform to guardian of society

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*I used to live with my grandparents at Muchukota, Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh. My grandfather, Obala Reddy has about 4 acres of agricultural land. He was supporting me with the income he received from his land.*

*I was 15 years old back then. I was repeatedly punished at school for not doing my homework. I just ran away from home. I managed to reach Tirupati railway station and spent a whole day on the platform. I was scared and soon enough repented my hasty act. My poor grandparents! They had lost all hope of finding me.*

*SATHI staff noticed me roaming on the platform and took me to their shelter in Tirupati. I was counselled and reunited with my grandparents. I remember Mr. Balakrishna from SATHI very well. He helped me a lot.*

*The time I spent at the shelter was quite memorable. I played with the other boys there and sometimes I cooked too. Once I returned home, I vowed never to run away again.*

*I, Manoj Venkatarao Reddy, have since completed my graduation and I am a Sub-inspector of Police in Delhi. I truly hope I made my grandparents proud, and am extremely thankful to SATHI for finding me, and helping me rebuild my life.*

### **3. SATHI's Timely Help**

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It was 11 years ago. I was a young boy of 14, who would just laze around and do nothing. Seeing my callous attitude, my uncle scolded me and beat me up too. In a fit of rage, I left home in Pervalli, Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh.

I travelled to Tirupati by train and lived on the platform for 3 days. Though I ran away from home on impulse, for the first time I began experiencing hunger and fear. Living on a platform is no way close to being at home.

On the 4th day, SATHI staff approached me on the platform. They spoke to me and convinced me to accompany them to their shelter in Guntakal. Once at the shelter, the staff offered me food and took care of me. SATHI conducted various learning and counselling sessions. The counsellor at SATHI made me understand how important it was to be in the safe atmosphere of home.

Having experienced a scare on the platform, I decided to share the details of my family to SATHI. Mr. Gangayya contacted my parents and called them to the shelter. My father was very happy to see me.

Today, I am back with my family and live a dignified life. I buy salt in bulk quantities and sell them to dealers. My income ranges from Rs. 12,000 to 15,000 per month.

I, Tirupati Nayudu Adinarayana Puchkoyala, now dream of making it big in life and owe it to SATHI for reuniting me with my family.

### **4. From a Liability to an Asset**

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*My son Tirumala was all of 12 and was in 6th standard. He was severely reprimanded by his teacher for not doing his homework. Unable to bear the insult, he fled home.*

*He boarded a train from Tadapatri and alighted at Tirupati railway station. He did odd jobs on the platform to sustain himself for about 3 days till SATHI spotted him and took him with them.*

*A week later, I received a call saying my son was in SATHI's safe custody. My joy knew no bounds. I reached the shelter and met my boy. He was very scared and realised running away from home was a big mistake. He told me how he had suffered on the platform. He was counselled by the staff at SATHI.*

*My son continued his education on his return. I requested his teacher to be a bit gentle with the boy. Tirumala has since completed Diploma in Electronics and he is earning Rs.12,000, a*



month. He is getting married soon. I thank SATHI for turning my son from a liability to an asset.

Today, I Bhaskara Reddy, am a proud father and I am always excited to meet anyone from SATHI.

## **5. SATHI, My Second Home**

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How can I forget SATHI? They rescued me from the platform and here I am, a responsible adult. I was an aimless little boy, just 13, when I ran away. I did not think much. I boarded a train, without a ticket, and met some boys who suggested I should alight at Bengaluru. I was told Bengaluru is the land of opportunities.

However, when I reached Bengaluru, I began feeling lonely and insecure. I had no money on me. I have seen beggars in my life but never imagined I would beg one day to even get a meal. That one month on the platform was a scary experience.

Luckily, a gentleman from SATHI spotted me and took me to their shelter. At the shelter, I was asked to bathe and was served hot food. They organised an orientation camp for me and a few more runaway boys. The camp was a little far from the shelter and we learnt yoga and meditation, besides doing a bit of reading and writing.

Afternoons at the camp were fun. We were divided into groups and would play games like kabaddi, cricket etc. The camp was a nice warm place. I began thinking of my parents and to my surprise they arrived to take me back on the last day of the camp. I saw my friends' parents too. Everyone was crying and hugging each other. I went back home to Halaguru, in Mandya, and pursued my studies.

The counselling sessions at SATHI were productive and motivated me to go back home and do something worthwhile. SATHI was my second home. I still remember the care they gave me when I fell sick. Twelve years later, I drive my own auto and earn about Rs. 12,000 per month.

My parents are no more. But SATHI taught me to be a responsible human being. I now have to shoulder the responsibility of getting my younger sister married.

I, Manju Krishnappa, can never forget SATHI's role in my life and what a positive influence they have had on me.

## **6. Platform Horrors**

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I was a little boy and my friends brainwashed me into running away from home. I caught a train from K R Nagar in Mysore and landed in Bengaluru. I roamed around on the platform which would become my home for the next 2 years. Those were the worst years of my life. Initially, it gave me a high and seemed adventurous.

Soon enough, I realised it was degrading and there were a lot of risks involved. I made friends with other boys on platform and began smoking. Sometimes I would inhale correction liquid. My health began deteriorating over the period of 2 years I lived on the platform. That was the time I met someone from SATHI and they coaxed me into going with them to their shelter.

I was taken in very warmly and fed well. I had respiratory problems for which SATHI staff had me treated. They included me in the month-long camp organised for kids like me who had been on platforms and were into substance abuse.

The camp was fun. We were taught many interesting things like yoga, meditation, storytelling etc. It gave us time to introspect. The counsellors at SATHI convinced me to share the details of my family. The team spoke to my father who came to see me. The reunion was very emotional.

I now work in a shop that makes tents and earn about Rs.10,000 a month. My parents have forgiven me and we are happy now.

I, Ravichandra, owe this positive change to SATHI and I am indebted to them for reuniting me with my family.

## **7. SATHI, My Saviour**

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*Wow, you are from SATHI? You have come all the way to meet me? Quite a misadventure it was sir, my running away!*

*I wasn't too keen on studying and stopped school after 3rd standard. But my parents kept pressurising me to go to school. Unable to cope with the pressure, I chose to flee from my home in Gunipalli, Dharmavaram, in Andhra Pradesh.*

*I boarded the train to Dharmavaram without a ticket. I was very scared and felt everyone was staring at me with suspicion. I got down at Tirupati station. I made it my home for about a month. I would travel everyday by train to some place, but would return to Tirupati at night. With no money to buy food, I began picking up leftover food from the platform. It was a terrible time.*

*One day, I was approached by someone from SATHI who offered to take me to their shelter. I went with them as I knew nothing can be worse than being on a platform. At the shelter, people were warm and gave me food. Finally, I didn't have to struggle for my daily meal. I had never been more relieved.*

*The shelter was a clean place and I was given a crisp new set of clothes. Life at the shelter was organised. We spent time reading, writing, narrating stories and playing. It felt secure. SATHI had organised a month-long camp where we were counselled and given time to introspect.*

*There was a particular session on Mother's affection that brought tears to my eyes. I started missing home. I shared the details of my family and SATHI contacted my parents. My mother arrived at the camp. I hugged her and wept. It was a rebirth of sorts for me. I took an oath at the shelter that I would respect elders and work for the welfare of my family.*

*My father is no more. I work in the fields and earn Rs. 6,000 per month.*

*I, Kumar, have got a new lease of life and it's all because of SATHI.*

## ***8. Taking Me Home, the SATHI Way***

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It's a pleasure to meet you after 11 years Sir! I live in Raninagar, Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh, with my mother and Brother. I am 24 years old now. I was not regular at school. My mother beat me up and one day I ran away from home.

SATHI staff found me roaming on Guntakal railway platform. I had spent about 5 days on the platform. I travelled without a ticket and was petrified. I regretted running away from home. When SATHI offered me to take them to their shelter, I agreed and went with them. The staff welcomed me. I felt at ease as the place was clean and safe.

They gave me food and clean clothes to change into. For a boy, who had to pick leftover food, it meant a lot. I started feeling very secure at the shelter unlike the time I spent on the platform. I shared my family's details with SATHI and Mr. Jayaraju took me home.

On seeing me, my mother was inconsolable. She hugged me and wept. SATHI staff counselled me against running away. I learnt masonry and now I work as a mason. My dream is to become an independent contractor. My mother says I am a responsible man now. That makes me happy.

I, Rajesh, am indebted to SATHI for saving me from the clutches of the cruel platform life.

## ***9. Running Away from home - a Bad Choice***

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My father worked as a mechanic in a private company. We led quite a comfortable life. My mother wanted me to study well, but I was not too keen to learn. When I was in 8th standard, I had a few problems at school. My mother was unhappy and beat me up. Frustrated, I ran away from home.

I had foolishly fled in the heat of the moment and had no idea what I would do next. I boarded a train at Anantpur and alighted at Guntakal. What initially looked like an enjoyable ride, turned into a terrifying experience. I was approached by a few boys and they forced me to hang out with them. But I didn't feel up to it. I had no money and had to starve the entire time.

I remembered my family's immense faith in Lord Balaji, so I boarded a train to Tirupati. I spent 2 days at the Tirupati railway platform and I must say I was not at all happy. I was so scared!

SATHI found me and took me to their shelter. I was still restless and was not ready to share any details with them. They were warm and friendly. They did not force me to divulge anything. Being with them, reminded me of my family. The counsellor at the NGO spoke to me over 2 sessions. She made me understand how important it is to be back home and pursue my studies.

Today, I hold a degree and work as a delivery boy and make about Rs. 8,000 a month. I, Nandakishor, would like to thank SATHI for being there when I needed direction in life.

## ***10. SATHI Saves Once, Time to Save Himself Again***

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My son Karthi ran away when he was 18 years old. He boarded a train to Bengaluru from Vidyanayapuram, Mysore. He lived on the platform for 2 months. He became addicted to alcohol and tobacco.

SATHI staff found him on the platform and took him to the shelter. He was very well taken care of. They also inducted him into a month-long de-addiction camp. Mr. Ashok from SATHI brought him back home and we were very happy to have our son back.

He is 29 years old now and works in a tea stall. He brings home Rs. 100, a day. He does not pick fights with us anymore. The camp helped him become a better person. Sadly he still drinks and doesn't accept new jobs and opportunities thrown his way. We sent him to the de-addiction camp multiple times, but he hasn't recovered completely.

Though I am worried about his alcohol addiction, I am hopeful he will give it up one day and lead a more fulfilling life. I, Puttaraju, Karthi's father appreciate SATHI's efforts in reuniting children with their families and am very grateful to the staff for taking care of my son.

## **II. SATHI Shows the Way**

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*I vividly remember the day I ran away from home. My childhood friends who weren't keen on studies urged me to bunk school. I finally gave in. It wasn't just them though; I didn't like school much either. My mother was vexed with my attitude. She would often scold me. That day, when she saw me bunking school, she beat me up.*

*Noticing my despair, my friends convinced me that I should run away from home. I was in 7th standard. I borrowed Rs. 70 from a friend and I already had about Rs. 30 which my uncle had given me. With the cash in hand, I bought a ticket from Gulbarga to Raichur. Once I boarded the train I was really confused and scared.*

*I got down at Raichur railway platform. I had nowhere to go. I was physically and mentally exhausted. I lay in a corner and don't remember when I fell asleep. When I woke up the next morning, I saw a few people approaching me and I felt very nervous. They said they were from SATHI. They spoke to me and took me along with them to the shelter.*

*The shelter was clean and I felt safe and calm for the first time in weeks. A few more boys were there. They served us hot food and gave us clean clothes to change into. They taught us many things at the shelter and allowed us to play carom. We were allowed to watch some programmes on television.*

*Sharanappa and Suresh from SATHI were so affectionate and open that one could inherently trust them. SATHI found a spot for me into their residential camp. The camp brought about a change in me and I began missing home. I hesitantly shared the details of my family. To my surprise, my father and uncle came to fetch me back home. I cried seeing them and decided never to run away. At home, my mother hugged me and cried inconsolably.*

*Once back home, I completed my B. Com and have learnt basic computing skills. I am now keen to get into the government services and I am preparing for the exams.*

*I, Shivalingayya, owe it to SATHI for bringing peace and happiness back in to my life.*

## **12. Rise from Rubble**

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Are You from SATHI? Please come in. When I see you, memories come flooding back! I was 19 then. One of my friends suggested that we run away from our small hamlet, Gounapalli, Kolar, and go explore big cities. He convinced me that there was plenty of adventure and opportunity awaiting us. Quite a daring decision it was!

We both reached Kolar and boarded a train to Tirupati. Our ticket-less travel began. We got off at Tirupati. But things didn't quite turn out as expected. I ended up spending 2 years on the platform.

Initial days were tough and scary. Slowly, I got accustomed to platform life. I made some friends. I polished shoes of commuters, wash utensils at railway kiosks and also clean the coaches.

All of a sudden, someone told me about the shelter run by SATHI and how they helped boys who ran away from home. I would go to SATHI shelter once in 2 days and again go back to the platform. SATHI staff spoke to me and convinced me to stay there and attend an orientation camp. I agreed and it was quite a fun experience. They would have various learning sessions and also let us play and watch movies. The movies were often about family and relationships. When I would be alone, I would think of those movies and remember my family.

The staff at SATHI counselled me and convinced me to share my address with them. Once they had my address, they were very swift in reuniting me with my family. My parents were very happy to see me and so was I.

My father runs a saloon and I help him in his shop. I am happily married and I have 2 daughters. Looking back, I wonder what I would have done if I continued living on the railway platform.

I, Reddappa, want to thank SATHI for the timely help that changed my life for better.

### *13. Lost and found, Found and Lost!*

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My brother, Gopal, left home when he was 16 in the year 2005. He stole some money from home and was afraid he would be punished. He managed to reach Raichur railway station from Jadaladinni, Devadurg. He spent the day at platform. He was really scared.

A few children who had been rescued by SATHI spotted him and informed the staff. They rescued my brother and took him to the shelter. SATHI took care of my brother very well. He expressed his fear to the staff that if he went home, he would be handed over to the police. SATHI assured him that his family would only be happy to have him back and he shouldn't be afraid. SATHI enrolled him in a camp and he was very happy to be a part of all the activities.

Once he was convinced his family wouldn't punish him, he gave SATHI our details. Ningappa from SATHI brought him home and we were very happy. Gopal, lived at home for 2 months and ran away again. He seemed mentally disturbed. We are thankful to SATHI for all their efforts, but sad, he did not continue to stay at home.

### *14. Platform crushes, SATHI comforts*

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The name SATHI brings back pleasant memories. It is 11 years since I spent time at SATHI shelter. I was in 6<sup>th</sup> standard and would often skip school. My father beat me up and I ran away from home.

I reached Raichur station by train and spent a day on the platform. Just when I was about to get the details of train arrivals and departures, a man approached me and began talking. I became very nervous. Seeing that I was troubled, he introduced himself and told me about SATHI and offered to help me.

I accompanied him to the shelter. I met many boys there, but don't remember them now. We were given hot, tasty food. On a platform, we struggle even for basic needs. We had informal learning sessions at SATHI and were allowed to watch television. SATHI also enrolled me in their camp. I enjoyed being at the camp and learnt yoga and meditation. We would also play in the evenings.

They showed us many touching movies on relationships and family. When I went to bed those thoughts haunted me. I wanted to get back home. I gave SATHI my details and they reunited me

with my parents. My mother was very emotional on seeing me and made my father promised he would never beat me again.

I pursued my studies till 8<sup>th</sup> standard. I learnt to drive. I have a learner's license and I supply mineral water cans. Soon, I will get my permanent license. I earn about Rs. 6,000 per month.

I, Parashuram, dread to think what would have happened to my life on platform without SATHI.

### ***15. Runaway Sets up Mobile Repair Shop***

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I was a lazy boy and wouldn't do anything productive. My parents were fed up and would often taunt me. I was 11 and too young to understand why I was being reprimanded. I decided to run away from home, Tambarallapalli, Chittoor.

I reached Tirupati railway station. I spent about 5 days on the platform. Life was so hard. I was starving. I was very afraid and did not know whom to approach for help. A staff from NGO Balatejas, took me to their shelter and handed me over to SATHI later.

At SATHI, I felt secure. Having suffered on the platform for even a morsel of food, the sight of hot, hygienic food at SATHI was so welcoming. The staff was warm and I decided to disclose my details. They took me home and my parents were relieved to have me back. I continued my studies till 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

I run my own mobile repair shop now and earn Rs. 7,000 per month. I am happy to be independent.

I, Jeevan, always remember SATHI fondly for rescuing me.

### ***16. Children Belong at Home, Not on a Railway Platform***

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We live in Santepalli, Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. I had stolen Rs. 200 from my father and spent it all. Afraid that he would beat me up I ran away and reached Renigunta junction.

I lived on the platform for 3 months. I made some friends on the platform who had also made it their home. With these friends, I would board trains, travel and return to Renigunta junction at night. I would clean the bogies with my shirt. Sometimes I would beg. There were days when I went without money and food.

A few days later, some men approached me and began talking. They persuaded me to go with them. They were from SATHI. I was afraid and did not trust them. However, I went with them and reached the shelter. At the shelter, I saw a few more boys from the platform. I felt relieved.

SATHI had organised an orientation camp at Raichur and I was sent there with a few more boys. I was happy at the camp. They taught us many things. They let us play and showed us movies. At the end of the camp, SATHI asked me for my home address and I shared it with them. SATHI reunited me with my family. I now work in a stone quarry and make about Rs. 8000 a month.

I, Pavan, decided never to run away and all I want to say is, Thank you, SATHI.

### ***17. Family Thanks SATHI, Runaway Not Too Keen***

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"Don't ask how much I earn. Only be informed that I am settled well now. Your job is over the moment you handed me over to my family." Ambarish from Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh was in no mood to entertain a conversation with SATHI. However, his grandmother shares his story.



Ambarish was quite irregular at school. His mother beat him up badly one day and he disappeared the same night. He landed at Tirupati railway station and was there for a month on the platform.

Ambarish would tell me later that people from your organisation took him along with them. He was counselled at the shelter by SATHI officials. They somehow convinced him to share his details. N Jagadeesh from SATHI finally brought him back home.

Ambarish occasionally visits all of us, gives some money, and returns. We are happy that you rescued him from the platform and now he is well settled in life.

### ***18. SATHI Helps a Guilty Brother***

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My brother, Nallashivamuttu left home when he was 13. I wanted him to work as a weaver and forced him to do that. So, he ran away from home. I was feeling guilty. Initially, we thought would lodge a complaint with the police, but decided to wait.

SATHI staff spotted him at the platform at Gudur and took him to the shelter. My brother would often tell us that SATHI cared for him and the other boys at the shelter. They would serve hot food and give them clean clothes to wear. They had informal teaching sessions too. Further, they were allowed to play and watch television. SATHI managed to locate us and brought him back home.

My brother now works with a water supply contractor at The Chennai Municipal Corporation and he earns Rs. 8,000 per month.

I, Damodaran from Narayanavanam, Chittoor, always remember SATHI with gratitude.

### ***19. Runaway Yesterday, Engineer Today***

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*When I look back, it is scary. The pressure to go to school was immense. My parents admitted me to a hostel when I was in 7th standard and I hated being there. So, I decided to escape. I ran away from Senigal, Guduru, Anantpur.*

*I reached Tadapatri station. I noticed a train that was about to leave and I hopped on it. I had no money on me. I was hungry and scared. I did not know what to do. I got down at Tirupati railway station and lived on the platform for 10 days.*

*I realised I couldn't survive without food. So, I started begging. I regretted running away. There were a few children on the platform and they took me to the SATHI shelter. I saw many kids like me there. SATHI welcomed me and offered me hot food. For the first time after leaving home, I ate good food.*

*I quite enjoyed my stay at the shelter. The staff was kind and we would play, watch television and also read. SATHI consoled me and asked me to share my details so that they can reunite me with my parents.*

*SATHI contacted my family and my uncles came to fetch me. I cried when I left SATHI. At home, my mother was happy to see me, but was inconsolable. She made me promise that I would never run away.*

*I am now a mechanical engineer and earn Rs. 20,000 per month. I send Rs.6,000 home to help my father sustain his agricultural land. I can't believe that I am now a responsible son.*

*I, Venkateshwar, can't imagine how my life would have been if not for SATHI's timely intervention.*

## ***20. Runaway Turned Entrepreneur***

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My brother would always tell me I should work and be of some use to the family. I was quite lazy and did not like to work. Seeing that I showed no signs of helping the family, my brother beat me up. I was upset and I ran away from home.

I reached Yadgiri and boarded a train to Wadi. Once I got off at Wadi, I started feeling alone and insecure. SATHI staff, who were on the lookout of runaways like me, spotted me. They convinced me that I should go with them and took me to their shelter. The stay at the shelter was enjoyable. There was enough food for all us unlike the platform and friends to play with. No one bothered us. On the contrary, the staff were very kind. Nonetheless, I wanted to return home.

I gave my address to the SATHI staff and they took me home. I was so glad to see my parents and relieved that my brother had gone out. After 11 years, I am happy to tell you I run a hotel at Kandakur in Yadgiri. I earn about Rs. 10,000 a month and lead a comfortable life.

I, Jagannatha, owe all this to SATHI.

## ***21. SATHI's Noble Effort***

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When I was 14 years old, I was beaten up by mother every day for not helping her with the chores. Fed up, I ran away from Ayyavarappalli, Anantpur and boarded a train to Tirupati.

Then on I lived on the platform for 4 days. Those days were the worst days of my life. I was hungry and could not find any food. I was so sad and scared, tears welled up in my eyes. I thought of my mother.

A few boys at the platform befriended me and suggested we all go to shelter where kids are taken care of. They knew about SATHI. Since I had no idea about it, I was sceptical. They convinced me and we all went there. To my surprise, we were received warmly and fed hot tasty food. We played games and watched television.

The staff said they would help me get home and I shared my address with them. SATHI took me home. On seeing me, my mother was overjoyed and hugged me. I realised my mistake.

I am 25 years old now. I work as a supervisor in Arogya Milk Marketing Company in Ayyavaripalli and make a decent living by earning Rs. 9,000 per month.

I, Pundarikaksha, am very glad that NGOS like SATHI reunite runaways like me with their families. I can't imagine my life otherwise. My ambition now is to join the Indian Army.

## ***22. SATHI Supports an Aggrieved Child***

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My mother died when I was young and my father remarried. My step-mother was not kind to me. My father had also left home as he had some issues. I could not live at home anymore and decided to go in search of my father. I could not find him anywhere and did not want to return home.

I went to Raichur and lived on the platform for 2 days. I was so scared and even thought of ending my life. Luckily, SATHI staff spotted me and counselled me. At the shelter, I felt secure as they were kind to me. The staff fed us well and they let us play games, watch Television.



Sometimes we would attend informal learning sessions too. I attended an orientation camp organised by SATHI. I not only enjoyed the sessions at the camp, but also realised I should go back home and lead a productive life.

I shared my details with SATHI staff and Mr. Devraj took me home. Though my father who had returned home by then was happy to have me back, I decided not to stay with him. Today, I drive my own auto rickshaw and earn about Rs. 6,000.

I, Sheru, now live with my grandparents happily because of SATHI.

### *23. Runaway Redeemed*

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Eleven years have gone by and I still wonder what might have happened to my son Neelesh, had SATHI not found him in time. My husband would always shout at the boy for not doing anything productive and whiling away his time in lazy pursuits.

Instead of mending his ways, he threatened to leave home. His father lost his temper and beat him up. Neelesh ran away from home angry. Our hearts were shattered. How would he survive? I would cry everyday thinking about him. We looked for him everywhere, in vain.

One fine day, we received a call from SATHI saying my son was in their safe custody. My joy knew no bounds on hearing the news. SATHI staff brought Neelesh home. Neelesh told us how he caught a train and ran away and landed on Raichur railway platform. He was very scared and insecure. SATHI spotted him and took him to their shelter. He was fed well. They let him settle in and made him part of an orientation camp.

Neelesh said he enjoyed the camp as there were many fun things to do. He watched movies, played with the other boys and also learned yoga and meditation. There were informal learning sessions as well. Once he mellowed down, he shared our contact details to SATHI.

Today, he works in a construction company in Pune and earns Rs. 12,000 per month. He is married and has 2 sons.

I, Takkaramma, Neelesh's mother shudder to think the type of life my son would be leading today if not for SATHI.

### *24. A Fresh Start*

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What do you do with a boy who is neither interested in studies nor in grazing sheep? He was 13 and was very irresponsible. One day, much to our despair, our son Alisab, disappeared from home at Koppar, Devdurg in Raichur. His mother became bedridden with worry.

He travelled from Koppar to Raichur and finally Guntakal, without a valid train ticket. He alighted at Guntakal railway station and started roaming on the platform. He did not know how cruel life would be. He lived on the platform for 3 days, didn't get anything to eat, and was hungry, scared and insecure. He was very weak when SATHI staff spotted him and took him to the shelter.

My son recounts that it was at the shelter he ate good food after leaving home. He spent about 7 days at the shelter. The time he spent at the shelter mellowed him down. Staff at SATHI were kind and counselled him. He was made to realise what a mistake it was to run away from home.

Once the realization dawned upon him, he gave our address to the SATHI staff and they brought him home. On seeing him we were so happy and Alisab's mother was inconsolable.

Today, he works as a labourer in a construction industry and earns Rs.9,000 a month. He is happily married.

I, Gokulsab Sheikh, Alisab's father, truly feel that the time spent at SATHI changed my boy for the better. Thank you SATHI!

## **25. *The Second Chance***

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*My mother wanted me to work at a hotel. I hated it as I would get beaten and abused there. One day, I did not go to the hotel and mother beat me up. I was very upset. When I tried to explain to her, she would not understand and keep pressurizing me to go and work.*

*Fed up, I ran away from home along with a friend. We boarded the train from Raichur and reached Guntakal. We did not have a valid train ticket. We got off at Guntakal railway station and roamed on the platform. We spent 6 days living on the platform. I went hungry for the first few days. The third day, I started begging. A week went by.*

*On the seventh day, a few boys, a bit older than me, approached me and asked me to accompany them. I was tempted and went with them. They took me to the shelter run by SATHI at Guntakal. I understood that SATHI was helping boys like me who had run away from home. They served fresh hot food and I was so happy. It had been days since I ate good food. I gulped it down.*

*The staff at SATHI began counselling me and asked me for my address. They advised me to go back home to my parents. I told them where my parents lived and Mr. Ramprasad accompanied me home. He also counselled my parents and pleaded with them not to send me back to the hotel. Things became better at home.*

*Today, I work with a flower merchant and earn about Rs. 4,500 a month. I am saving some money to buy an auto-rickshaw.*

*I, Shahnawaj, cannot forget SATHI's role in my life.*

## **26. *Anger My Downfall, SATHI My Lifeline***

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I remember fighting with my sister. I was all of 11, and can't remember why I fought with her. In a fit of anger, I left home.

I boarded a train from Raichur to Guntakal. I lived on the Guntakal platform for 5 days. I survived for about 2 days with the little money I had on me. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, with no money left, I had to starve. I started getting very insecure on the platform. I was very confused and did not know what to do.

A gentleman approached me and began talking to me. He wanted me to go with him to a shelter where they took care of boys like me who had run away from home. I later learnt that the shelter was run by the NGO SATHI. The shelter was very clean and the staff welcomed me in. They served me hot food and told me to relax. I felt very relieved and there was someone who I could talk to.

There were a few boys my age at the shelter. They became my friends. We would play, watch television and read a bit. SATHI staff counselled me and asked me why I had runaway. They convinced me to go back home and that's where I would be safe. I had realised it by then. The few days I spent at the platform were far from pleasant. I shared my personal details and SATHI called my father.

My father arrived at the shelter and took me home. My mother was so happy to see me and warned my sister never to fight with me.

I, Nagaraj, resident of Urukundi, Irannanagar, Raichur, want to thank SATHI and wish them well in their continued work of rescuing children like me and putting them back on track.

## *27. Orphaned and Anchored*

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I lost both my parents in 2005 and I was staying alone at my house in Mangalwar Peth, Raichur. I was studying in 6<sup>th</sup> standard. The neighbours were helping a bit. One heavy shower brought my mud house down. I was left with no option but to go to my uncle's house in Sirawar.

My uncle's family wasn't very happy to have me and would ignore me. I was hurt and so I left the house. I went to Raichur by bus and then reached the railway station. I lived on the platform for a day. I felt orphaned and I was very depressed.

Meanwhile, someone from SATHI approached me and spoke to me. They offered to take me to their shelter and I went with him. I quite liked the shelter. It felt safe. SATHI had arranged for a camp for boys like me. I remember there were many boys. We were fed well and we played a lot. We would watch movies too.

At the end of the camp I gave SATHI my uncle's address and they took me to his house in Raichur. My uncle admitted me to a school. Later, I was sent to my other uncle's place in Bengaluru and I started living there.

Years have gone by, and today I work in a construction site as a daily wages labourer. I earn about Rs. 400 a day. I am now comfortable at my uncle's place.

I, Ramesh, thank SATHI for saving me from the shackles of platform life.

## *28. Home Sweet Home*

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I lost both my legs to polio as a child. I was in 12<sup>th</sup> standard. I told my father that I was no more interested in studies and did not want to go to college after my 12<sup>th</sup> standard. My father was furious and he hit me. I felt humiliated and I decided to leave home.

I boarded a train from Dhone to Tirupati without a ticket. I got down at Tirupati and lived on the platform for 3 days. On the first day I was brave. But as time went by I felt very depressed and regretted running away from home. On the third day, I was unable to find food and I began starving.

Some people from SATHI approached me and asked me who I was, where I had come from etc. I was not prepared to divulge my details and I kept quiet. They convinced me and took me to their shelter. I went with them. I saw many boys already at the shelter. I stayed quiet for most part. Being fed well and spoken to kindly, I opened up. It meant a lot to me. A starving kid on the platform knows the value of a hot plate of food.

I had also by then realised it was unsafe to stay on the railway platform. At SATHI, I was counselled about staying with my parents and doing something worthwhile instead of turning into a vagabond at the platform. I decided to go back home and pursue my education.

I have now completed a degree in B.com and I have a basic working knowledge of computers. I am on the lookout for a government job.

I, Srinivasulu from Dhone, Andhra Pradesh express my gratitude to SATHI for their timely help.

## *29. Fight and Flight*

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My son Malingaraya was a very adamant child. He always argued with everybody. He would never listen to anybody. His father I used to scold and beat him up regularly. He told us that he did not want to go to school and we agreed. But we expected him to help the family by working in the shop.

I work in the fields as an agricultural labourer. His father worked in ACC cement as a labourer. But our son wouldn't do anything, neither study nor work. Frustrated, his father beat him up. The next day, the boy was nowhere to be found.

Later, when he came back home, he said SATHI had found him roaming on the platform at Wadi trying to board a train to Mumbai. He was then taken to a SATHI shelter and was treated very kindly.

Though he did not want to share his details with anyone for a few days, the SATHI team coaxed him to tell them his home address. Someone from SATHI brought him back to us. We were very happy.

But my happiness didn't quite last. His father died. Malingaraya is married and has moved away from home with his wife. He is not in touch with me. I have lost both my legs and my neighbours take care of me. I am told that he has a son and he seem to have settled in life.

Though I, Rayamma, am happy SATHI brought my son back I am sad he doesn't care for me anymore.

## *30. Child Labour Drives Him Away*

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We live in Kanahalli, Yadgir, Karnataka. My son Hanumant now drives a tractor and earns about Rs.6000 a month. He is happily married and has a son. He stays in Sahapur with his wife and child.

I did not imagine I would be saying this about my son. I thought we had lost him forever.

I am a widow and have 2 sons. I have 2 acres of dry land and have no income. We were very poor and I could not educate my children.

Hanumant is my eldest son and I had sent him to work as a bonded labour. We were very poor and I could not educate my children.

I understand that Hanumant suffered at the hands of the landlord. Unable to bear the burden, he ran away when he was 15. I looked for him everywhere, but to no avail. He had runaway to Yadgiri and took a train to Raichur. He was there on the platform for 2 days. Life was so tough for him. There was no food or shelter. He resorted to begging. At least, while he was a bonded labour, he would get food to eat.

SATHI saw spotted him and took him to their shelter in Raichur. Mere sight of good hot food, clean clothes and the clean shelter made my boy happy, he would say. He lived at the shelter and attended the camp organised by SATHI. They would play, watch movies and learn a few things. At the end of the camp he gave the staff his details and they brought him home. Now he is a happy man and I am a happy mother. I am very grateful to SATHI for all that they did for my boy.

I am very grateful to SATHI for all that they did for my boy.

### *31. Life Comes a Full Circle*

---

Come in Sir, it's me Hanumesh whom you rescued from the platform. Time just flies, doesn't it sir? I was in 9<sup>th</sup> standard when I ran away- that was 11 years ago. My parents forced me to work in the farm. I didn't want to and ran away to Alur from where I caught a train to Guntakal.

I had no money and was aware of the risks of travelling without a valid train ticket. But I reached Guntakal without any untoward incident or eventuality. I spent a day on the platform. The next day I was terribly hungry and couldn't find food. I began getting frustrated.

Someone from your team approached me and took me to their shelter. At the shelter, the staff spoke to me well. When they served me food, I realised how difficult it was to be on the platform to even fight for basic needs. I became comfortable at the shelter. I was counselled and asked for my personal details. I realised life would be much better off if I got back home.

The staff contacted my parents and took me home. Today, I work as a labourer on the farm. I am married and have a son. I earn about Rs. 5,000 pm. I live with my parents happily.

I can genuinely say, SATHI, is a true friend during my testing times!

### *32. Sheltered by SATHI*

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SATHI is ingrained in my memory to this day. How can I ever forget the people who brought my son home? The mere name brings happy memories Sir.

Nagesh, my son, whom you brought back reunited with us home is now a responsible adult. He works as a server and cleaner at a hotel. The owner pays him Rs. 8,000 per month. He sends me some money every month too. I still regret shouting at my son.

We were a very poor family and desperately needed money. I forced him to work in a hotel and he refused. We had an argument and then he fled. He went to Wadi from Sedam by train. He lived on the Wadi platform for a while. Those were the toughest days of his life, as he told me later. He slept on benches and begged for food.

A few boys on the platform befriended him and told him about a shelter run by SATHI. He decided to see what exactly was so great about this shelter on hearing his friends sing its praises. What he experienced at the shelter changed his life for the better. Unlike on the platform, he felt secure at the shelter. He did not have to beg for food or sleep on hard cold benches.

His frustration and sadness finally crumbled and he shared his address with the SATHI staff. We had almost given up hope of finding our son back, when you brought him home. My heartfelt thanks to your organisation SATHI!!

### *33. Story Rewritten*

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Did you really come all the way to meet me? I am touched sir. I had failed in my class 11<sup>th</sup> standard exams. I knew my parents would be very angry.

It wasn't easy running away. I, Kireetappa was scared and nervous to be on a train, all alone, not knowing where to go. I had failed in my class 11<sup>th</sup> standard exams. I knew my parents would be very angry.

I reached Wadi from Alur by train. I lived on the platform for 2 days. I had been starving all day. After a day, I turned to begging. People gave me food as I was physically challenged. However, I realised

that wasn't how I should spend my life. Begging on platforms was not the solution. It wasn't a good idea to run away from home and certainly not a safe one. I missed my family and wanted to go back and face them.

Just as I realised this, a few men from SATHI approached me and took me to their shelter. They assured me that they would take me home. At the shelter, a counsellor told me that failing in an exam was not the end of the world and I shouldn't have been so impulsive and left home. These words, along with the secure atmosphere at the shelter, the sumptuous meals and being given a clean place to sleep as against a platform, struck a chord with me.

I decided to give them my address. SATHI took me home. I completed my studies and now hold a degree in teaching as well. I get a pension of Rs. 1,500 a month. My ambition is to get a government job, and would like to take care of my mother. Sadly, my father is no more but I am trying my best to support my family.

SATHI, what a fine job you do showing runaways like me a clear direction in life!

### ***34. From Fire to Frying Pan, Thank God for SATHI!***

---

Yes sir, I remember everything that transpired those days 11 years ago! Though we belong to Kosagi, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, my parents were working in Mumbai. So, they put me in a hostel at Kosagi. I was missing my parents and so I ran away from there.

I boarded a train from Kosagi to Mumbai and got off at Victoria Terminus, Mumbai. The entire journey, I travelled without a ticket. Fortunately, I wasn't caught. Once in Mumbai, I realised what a huge city it was and I would never be able to reach my parents. I did not have their address either.

I lived on the platform for 7 days. I began venturing out towards temples and masjids and that took care of my hunger. I would come back again and sleep on the platform. Those days were terrifying. I desperately wanted to go back home and began looking for trains going to Andhra.

A man on the platform showed me a train and I boarded it. I assumed it would go to Kosagi, but it stopped at Hyderabad. I alighted at Hyderabad and spent 3 days on the platform. I worked in some tea stalls to earn money and buy food. On the fourth day, SATHI officials on the platform spotted me took me to their shelter in Vishakhapatnam. I lived there for a month and attended the month-long camp. By then I had given SATHI my details.

While SATHI was trying to contact my relatives, they came across a missing police complaint filed after I ran away. SATHI coordinated with the police officials and confirmed it was indeed a complaint filed by my father. They took me home and my parents had arrived by then. They were relieved to have me back home.

After 11 years, today, I work in the construction industry as a mason in Chandrapura, Bengaluru and I get around Rs. 600 for my day's work. I am married and have three sons. Though I don't remember who brought me back home, I can never forget SATHI in my life.

### ***35. Hostel to Platform to Home, Seen it All***

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*I have just finished my B.Com. I am very good with computers. My father is a construction worker and earns about Rs. 6,000 a month. I want to get into government service and support my family.*

*Yes, it was your organisation SATHI that got me back on track. Eleven years ago, I was staying in a hostel in Adoni. The food served there was unpalatable. When we complained to*

*the warden, he scolded us and sent us away. We approached him again only to be beaten up. When I told my parents about the incident, they asked me to stay on and not complain. Every day at the hostel was a challenge.*

*Frustrated, I ran away from the hostel. I reached Adoni station and blindly boarded a train. I did not have a valid ticket and did not know where to go. From the beginning, I was nervous and scared. The train stopped at many stations and I simply kept watching.*

*When it reached Guntakal, it seemed like a fairly large station and I decided to get down. To my luck, I did not encounter any major setbacks. Some men approached me and said they would give me food. What more would a person like me want at that moment? I went with them only to realise it was shelter run by SATHI for kids like me who ran away. They served good food and what a relief it was for me! After all, the food at the hostel had driven me crazy.*

*The staff did not stop at feeding me. They were kind and began enquiring about me and why I had run away. I told them my story and they were sympathetic.*

*They contacted my family and my maternal uncle arrived to take me home. My mother cried when she saw me.*

*I, Saddam, will always remember SATHI for giving me what I was craving for—decent food, and saving me from the horrors of platform life.*

### **36. No Reason to Run Away**

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I am now settled in Chamrajpet, Bengaluru and I am working work as an electrician. I earn not less than Rs. 8,000 every month. I am yet to be married. My mother lives in Gokul Nagar, Gulbarga in Karnataka. My father is no more.

I really don't remember the exact reason for running away from home Sir. All I remember is when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> standard, I boarded a train from Ravur and got down at Wadi railway station. I also remember very well that I was totally insecure and under tremendous tension once I landed there. I spent just a day at the platform. Some boys older to me befriended me and they gave me something to eat. I believed them.

They took me to a hostel type of building where I was given some food to eat. The staff at the Hostel (SATHI) began asking me about my parents, my home and I told them everything.

This short experience taught me a lot. I realised the importance of my family and home. That moment, I felt I should take care of my parents and not be addicted to bad habits.

I, Harikanta, am glad I was rescued by SATHI before falling into bad company.

### **37. A Lesson Learned**

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*Hello sir, please come in. I am so glad to meet you after so many years.*

*I buy and sell Tadapatri stones. Polished Tadapatri stones are used for flooring. My father also helps me in this business. We own 7 trucks. Together, we earn around Rs. 45,000 every month. I stay with my parents at Srinivasapuram in Andhra Pradesh.*



*Eleven years back, I was in a residential school. The food served there was very bad. I wasn't too keen on studies either. So, there was absolutely no motivation to stay on. I requested my parents many times to remove me from the hostel. But they would never listen. When I couldn't take it anymore, I ran away.*

*I reached Tadapatri railway station and got into a train headed to Tirupati. I picked up this idea from a friend who had runaway too. I lived on the platform for 2 days. Looking back, I wonder what possessed me to take such huge risk. When the third day dawned, some men approached me on the platform and asked me where I had come from and so on and so forth. They assured me they would take very good care of me. I went with them to the shelter run by SATHI. I ate well at the shelter and played with other boys who were there.*

*Later, SATHI staff took me to the shelter in Guntakal and contacted my parents. My father arrived at the shelter and was extremely emotional on seeing me. He hugged me too.*

*As advised by the staff at SATHI, I went back home and pursued my studies, I am a graduate and I am quite proud of myself.*

*I, Nageshwara, owe it to SATHI for changing my life for the better. I am 25 years old and a very happy man now!*

### **38. Humming Back to Life**

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*The time I spent at on the railway platform, at Wadi was horrible and I would like to forget those experiences.*

*I was studying in 6th standard in a private school. My teachers were very strict. I was struggling with my studies and was not at all keen on continuing my education.*

*My parents were working in Mumbai as construction site labourers. I was staying with my relatives. I did share with them that I was not interested keen to go to school but they did not listen to me. I had no choice but to run away. I boarded a passenger train that stopped at our village, without a ticket. I got down at Wadi station. I stood there wondering what to do next. I was also very hungry.*

*A person approached me and asked why I was there and where I wanted to go. I did not say anything. Noticing that I was hungry and nervous the person asked me to accompany him for food. I was taken to a place where boys like me were playing and enjoying. I was a bit relieved. The mere sight of food at the shelter, made me happy as I had starved for days. Even today, I remember SATHI with gratitude. The SATHI representative did not stop at that. He advised me against running away and explained to me how dangerous it can be to be on platforms.*

*I, Shrikant told him my address and they took me back to my relatives in Tanda, Gulbarga. Now, I remember you very well. After getting back home, I completed my PU and earned a course in Disco Jockeying from Mumbai. I now earn money as Disc Jockey at weddings, birthdays, elections, festivals and anniversaries. Some months, I get plenty of offers, while some months are pretty lean. Life is good now.*

*SATHI's intervention proved to be a turning point in my life.*



### *39. Flee in Frustration, Return with Joy*

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I remember I was studying in 5<sup>th</sup> standard at Mujaffarnagar, Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh). I quarrelled with my friends often. During one such fight, my teacher entered the class and beat me up badly.

After this incident, I developed fear towards school. I did not disclose this to my parents as I was afraid, they will blame me. Next day, I was in no mood to go to school. I was mentally disturbed. I decided to leave home. I had seen and heard many boys leaving home and catching a train to Chennai.

I decided to do the same and headed straight to Kurnool railway station. I boarded a train that was going to Chennai. After a couple of hours into my journey, it insecurity hit me. I was tense and scared. I got down at Chennai station where I spent 3 days. Those 3 days were the worst days of my life. As I had no money, I began to beg.

On the fourth day, a few boys said they would take me to a place. I saw many boys there and they looked happy. It was SATHI's shelter. The staff took me in and served me hot food. For a boy who had starved for days and begged for food, the sight of hot food was heavenly.

A few days later, SATHI had organised an orientation camp for us. We were taught some exercises, meditation and were shown movies. We played a lot too. At the end of the camp, I gave SATHI my address and they brought me to Guntakal.

My father was called and both he and I were very happy to meet. He took me home and my mother cried and told me never do to run away again. I studied up to 8<sup>th</sup> standard.

Today, I am painting contractor and have given jobs to 15 people. I make about Rs. 1,000/- a day. I am happily married and have 2 boys. My parents live with me.

I, Raju, want to thank SATHI for the life I lead now.

### *40. The Penultimate Peril on Platform*

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Hello Sir, my cousin Naveen Kumar has told me about SATHI. He would leave home under the pretext of going to school and go elsewhere. He was caught red handed by his father who was angry at him. So, he ran away from Wadi, his home in Chittipaur, Gulbarga. We were all shocked at his guts to leave home.

He reached Wadi station trying to board a train to Mumbai. Luckily, your staff spotted him and intervened. He told me later after his return that you took him to the SATHI shelter. The counsellor advised him to go back home. Naveen gave them his address and the staff brought him back home.

His parents often told me how happy they were to have their son back and they were very thankful to SATHI. Naveen studied till eighth standard. He lost his parents in quick succession and he lived with his aunt.

Once he found a job as a driver, he moved out of his aunt's home. He earns about Rs. 9,000, a month. He is married. We are very happy that Naveen is settled now.

I, Shivasharanappa, Naveen's cousin would like to thank SATHI for reuniting my cousin with his family.

#### **41. Thrill Turned Terror**

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*It was in the year 2005. I wanted my parents to take me to market at Yadgiri as it was a bazaar day at Yadgiri. My parents did not want me to accompany them. Without their notice, I followed them along with my friend Alleppa. From my village Balavadagi, my parents boarded a bus to Yadgiri. We got into the same bus, but my parents were unaware of it. The bus was jam packed. By the time the bus reached Yadgiri, we could not find my parents.*

*Not knowing what to do next, we just got into another bus without knowing where it was heading. Later, we realised it was going to Surpur. The bus conductor asked us buy tickets. As we had no money, we couldn't. He was not ready to listen to us. He stopped the bus and offloaded us at an unknown location. We stopped a lorry and requested the driver to drop us off to Surpur. He obliged. We were clueless about our next move.*

*A lady selling flowers at the bus station enquired after us and we started crying. She not only consoled us but took us home with her and let us stay with her for 15 days. Shivamma, as we knew her later, was a very kind soul. We requested her to help us reach home. She borrowed some money from her neighbours and put us on a bus to Gulbarga. She instructed the conductor to drop us at Shahpur and help us board a bus to Yadgir. The conductor helped us and we reached Yadgir.*

*Somehow, we reached the Yadgir railway station and lived on the platform for 2 months. People from SATHI spotted us and took us to their shelter. We gave them our details and SATHI staff took us back home. We got lucky a second time.*

*I am now working as a bearer in one the canteens (C7) at Devenahalli International Airport, Bengaluru. I earn about Rs.12,000 a month. My food, accommodation and transport costs are taken care of, by my employer. I send some money to my parents and I am very happy.*

*I want to tell you that I did get lucky a third time. I was working at a tea stall before joining the canteen at the airport. I met a gentleman who asked me if I would like to work in a canteen and I agreed. And here I am. It's a miracle that I met people like Shivamma and SATHI.*

*I, Ramesh, can never forget these two people in my life.*

#### **42. My Lifeboat, SATHI**

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For a little boy who gets lost on a platform, even a plate of hot food becomes a luxury. That's why I can't forget SATHI.

My name is Javed and I was studying in an Urdu school in Halakatta, Gulbarga. I remember I was in 5<sup>th</sup> standard I remember. I couldn't read Urdu. So, I couldn't do my homework. Every day my teachers would punish me. My parents go to know about this. I thought they would at least understand my plight. But they would punish me too.

My friend Asif if went through the same issue and we decided to run away. We walked to Wadi station and boarded a train without a ticket. We reached Yelahanka. We had found the will to flee, but did not know what to do. I was afraid, but Asif was very brave. We starved for an entire day. We decided to go back to Wadi. We boarded a train, again without a ticket, to Wadi.

SATHI came to our rescue at the platform. They took us to their shelter and offered us food. We began to relax and feel much better. We lived for 3 days at the shelter. It was such a coincidence that Asif's grandmother came looking for him at the shelter. She took him back home. Once he left, I decided to tell the staff my home address and they took me home.

After returning, I continued my studies and appeared for my 12<sup>th</sup> standard examination. I failed in 2 subjects and I am appearing again for the same. I have enrolled with the ITI for a course to train to be an electrician. I am hoping I will find a job in Dubai.

Sir, thank you for bringing me back home. I need to rush now for my evening *namaz* (prayers). See you later Sir! Thanks for coming!

### 43. Saved from Platform, But Not from Fate

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Oh! How much I regret running away from home. It was the most unpleasant experience of my life. I was in 7<sup>th</sup> standard and did not like to study. I would not be a regular at school. My parents were very angry at me. My father suggested I assist him in his job. He was a barber. I refused, so he beat me up.

I, Laxminarayana ran away to Dhone (Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh), railway station and boarded a train to Guntakal. I lived on the Guntakal platform for 3 days. I was hungry, tired and nervous. I saw some boys on the platform who were begging. I was very reluctant to beg. However, hunger and desperation drove me to beg.

For the very first time, I slept on the platform. On the third day, SATHI approached me and took me to their shelter. A clean place, the shelter offered security and hot food. I saw many boys like me there. They seemed happy. A couple of days later, I gave the SATHI team my address and they contacted my father. My father arrived at the shelter. He was in tears and so was I. My mother cried too on seeing me too.

I was working as a conductor in a private transport company. An accident damaged both my legs. I have been operated upon at Hyderabad. We spent about a lakh and a half for the surgery. My wife works as a labourer and earns about Rs.100 a day.

### 44. Reunions – Always Emotional

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Hello Sir, what a pleasure it is to meet you! I went looking for your shelter in Raichur, only to be disappointed as you had moved elsewhere.

Eleven years ago, I was in a hostel in Jegarkal. I did not like the place. I was also not very keen on studying. I completed my 9<sup>th</sup> standard. I wanted to escape from there. I ran away with Rs. 50 in my pocket. I travelled from Raichur to Jegarkal and boarded a train to Tirupati. I hadn't eaten anything. The next morning, the train stopped at Renigunta and I got down for breakfast.

I, Babu continued my journey till Tirupati. I lived on the Tirupati platform for 2 days. I had spent all the money. SATHI found me and took me to their shelter. By then, I had become so home sick. I pleaded with SATHI staff to take me home. They were kind enough to escort me home. It was an emotional reunion.

SATHI advised me not to run away again. I completed 10<sup>th</sup> standard and learnt to drive. I obtained a driver's licence too. Now I drive a petrol tanker and earn Rs. 6,000 a month. My mother and younger sister live with me. My dad is no more.

It is very heartening to know that you came looking for me sir. Thank you SATHI!!

#### *45. Hard Work Pays, Escaping Doesn't*

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I load and unload tomato boxes the farmers bring from their fields. I work in Madanapalli wholesale vegetable market with a commission agent. I make Rs. 5, 000 after a month of toiling. I am Zakir and I live at Peravali village, Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. I am married and have a son. I am looking look after my parents, who also work as labourers.

I refused to go to school as a young boy. I was not prepared to work either. My father would scold me and beat me too. I was 13 years old and I left home.

I boarded a train from Pattikonda and got down at Guntkal. I spent a day on the Guntkal platform. I begged for food. I was very depressed. A few boys on the platform told me about a safe place and brought me to SATHI. I clearly remember the food they served me there. They were kind. I played with other boys and watched television.

The counsellor spoke to me and advised me. I began thinking of home. I told them about my father and gave them my address. The staff took me home. My mother wept on seeing me. My father was happy that I had returned. I was happy too.

Back home I started working. Seeing me work hard, my father is very pleased.

Thank you SATHI!

#### *46. Unforgettable Gesture*

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Come on in Sir, not a day passes in our house without thanking you. I am Nagendra, Chiranjeevi's brother. We stay in Robospet, KGF in Karnataka. Our father is no more and mother works as a sweeper in at the municipal office.

My brother was studying in 5<sup>th</sup> standard when we found him missing one fine day. His friends enticed him saying with the opportunity they would go explore and see big cities.

Chiranjeevi travelled from Robospet to Tirupati by train without ticket. He lived on the platform for 90 days. He would travel to Renigunta every day without a ticket. When he told me that he begged for food and cleaned the bogies with his shirt, I was so upset.

Someone saw my brother and took him to a hostel (SATHI shelter). My brother would tell me after returning, that he would stay at the hostel at night and go the platform every morning. He continued to shine shoes for passengers or beg. He would bring some money back with him. The hostel had other boys too. They would play carom and watch television.

The staff at the hostel were kind to the boys and after a few days my brother divulged his details. They seem to have advised him about staying back at home. My brother after returning home, was a changed person. He wouldn't shout any more. He was calm and disciplined.

Today, he is employed with the house-keeping division at the municipal office in KGF. He earns Rs. 6,000 a month.

What else can I say sir, other than heartfelt gratitude to SATHI??

## 47. *Kudos to SATHI*

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SATHI! I remember. I don't know can't believe why you have come all the way to meet me after 11 years!

Every day, instead of being at school, I would board a train from Adoni to Guntakal. At Guntakal, I would work at a hotel and they would give me something to eat. When my lie was exposed, I got beaten up by my brother.

I ran away from home and went to the same hotel and worked from dawn to dusk. I couldn't handle the pressure and decided to go away from there too. I boarded another train and landed at Wadi station. That was the time I came in touch with SATHI. There, a few men approached me. Their kind words made me go with them. That was the time I came in touch with SATHI.

It was so different from what I experienced. I ate hot food; I didn't have to work like I did at the hotel. There were some more boys like me. We were monitored by the staff. They let us play and watch TV. I opened up and I slowly decided to share my home address with them. My mother and aunt came to the shelter to take me back home.

My parents are no more and I stay with my aunt at Shorapur, Yadgiri. I work as a JCB cleaner and earn about Rs. 4,000 a month.

I, Jeevan, am impressed by what SATHI does for boys like me who run away from home.

“ಸಾಥಿಗೆ ಜಯವಾಗಲಿ!” (Salutes to SATHI)

## 48. *SATHI to the Rescue*

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Our family hails from Hugenahalli, Raichur district, Karnataka. We lost our father in 2005. We have about 10 acres of dry land that I use for cultivation.

When Govind my brother was in 4<sup>th</sup> standard, our family went through a crisis and he was forced to quit school and work as a cleaner in a hotel. He did not like it. He kept pleading with us not to send him to work. But we desperately needed the extra money he would bring home.

One day, we found Govind missing. We were very guilty and sad. After all we forced him and to work and he ran away. Govind travelled to Raichur station and lived on the platform for 3 days. SATHI found him and took him to the shelter.

Govind told me later that he was very comfortable at the shelter and he shared our details with the SATHI team. SATHI contacted me and I went with my relative Krishna, a police constable to bring Govind back.

My brother told me that he enjoyed his time at the camp, eating good food, playing with other boys, watching movies etc. The SATHI team had counselled him too. Govind had changed a lot.

When I eloped with the girl I was in love with, Govind stood by my mother and took care of her. Now everything is resolved.

He has moved to Bengaluru and he is married. He is labourer at a construction site. My mother says, if not for SATHI we wouldn't have Govind back into our lives.

I, Gangappa, thank SATHI for bringing back runaways to their homes.

#### *49. SATHI Reunites a Two-Time Runaway*

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My son Nagaraj suffers from speech and hearing impairment. He has run away from home twice. His friends convinced him to run away. We could easily trace him the first time. But the second time, we had given up hope.

When we heard from SATHI, our joy knew no bounds. SATHI staff told us that they found our son living on a railway platform at Tirupati. He had been there for 7 days, starving and shivering in the cold.

SATHI took him to Balatejasu, a partner NGO, Tirupati, who counselled him. Since he belonged to Raichur, he was handed over to SATHI, Karnataka to trace his address and send him home. I wonder how SATHI got the details from my son who cannot speak or hear.

SATHI brought the boy home and he explained to us through gestures what he had been through. He seemed very happy to be back.

Today, 11 years later, my son works in a cement shop and is married. He looks after us too. He earns Rs.4,500.

I, Asha Reddy, am ever grateful to SATHI for find our son. I also request them to help my son get a better job.

#### *50. Our Saving Grace - SATHI*

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My nephew Suman left home seeking adventure. He was a young boy of 15 and he ran away with a few friends to explore big cities. He boarded the train from Kolar to Tirupati.

At Tirupati, he spent seven 7 days at on the platform. He was hungry and did not know what to do. As he was roaming, he was approached by SATHI staff. They took him to the shelter with them.

At the shelter, Suman felt like he was back home. He was served hot food and given clean clothes to change into. He was admitted to a month-long camp. Suman learnt yoga, meditation and participated in the games organised by the camp. He has very pleasant memories of the camp. At the end of the camp, he gave the staff his address and he was brought back home.

Suman is now 31 and he works in the municipality as a waste collector and he earns Rs. 5,000 a month. He is happily married and has a little boy. He is now independent and leads a very happy life.

I, Nagendra along with Suman's parents are indeed grateful to SATHI for finding our boy and reuniting him with us.

He is now independent and leads a very happy life.

## 5. 50 Case Studies based on Home visits done in Uttar Pradesh

These Home visits were conducted by team members of SATHI Kanpur in 2019. These cases are written by and from the perspective of the person who conducted the visit.

### 51. Jalandhar- Serving the nation in the armed forces

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When we meet children (now young men) after a decade it is satisfying to see them doing well. But, when we heard one of the boys has joined the armed forces, it gave the entire team a new high! Here is the story of Jalandhar who is working with the Indian Army today.

Our outreach worker met 13-year-old Jalandhar at Kanpur railway station in February 2009. Jalandhar was living in a village, around 20 kms from Kanpur. On that day, Jalandhar was influenced by his friends. He and his four friends had come to Kanpur railway station to roam. All of them were rescued and brought to the SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, the counsellor spoke to Jalandhar. The counsellor pointed out the mistake and explained to him what could have gone wrong, if he was approached by abusers. Jalandhar hadn't informed his parents. He realised this. He immediately shared his family details. The parents were called. They were reunited with their son at our shelter.

We did regular follow-up for a year. It was reassuring that he was doing well at school.

A decade later we were curious. We visited Jalandhar's home on 4<sup>th</sup> June'19. We met his mother and sister. **They told us that Jalandhar is now an engineer with the Indian Army and is posted in Ladakh.**

Jalandhar's father had passed away in 2013. His mother is at home. His elder brother is working near their home. Jalandhar visits home once in three months and helps the family financially.

His mother recollected and went on to tell our SATHI staff, **"When Jalandhar came back after the Kanpur incident, he was more responsible and kept good company. In 2013, when my husband passed away, the responsibility of the household fell on Jalandhar. He worked hard and got selected in the Army. We are proud that he is serving the nation and supporting the household."**

We also had a telephonic conversation with Jalandhar. He was very thankful that he was rescued by SATHI. He said, **"If I was approached by the wrong people, I would have been away from my family and don't know what would have happened to me. I am thankful for SATHI's help on that day."**

### 52. Md.Saajid Khan- A national level kabbadi player

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Eleven-year-old Saajid Khan was rescued from Kanpur railway station on a hot April day in the year 2008. He studied in a Madrasa while staying with his parents in Sitamarhi, Bihar. But Saajid disliked the Madrasa because of the punishments for not studying properly. So, he had run away with his friends from Madrasa. Then, he had wanted to give up studying and work instead. He had come to Kanpur in search of work.



*Counsellors at SATHI had tried to convince Saajid to study in a regular school instead of Madrasa. After a few counselling sessions, the child agreed to return to home and resume his education. He gave us the address and we traced the family. Two days later, Saajid's parents arrived at SATHI shelter in Kanpur. The anxious parents were happy to see their son safe and sound. The counsellors also discussed with the parents. They were made aware that he didn't like the Madrasa and wanted to study in a regular school. The parents agreed to his wishes. Saajid was reunited with his family on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008.*

*Moving to 2019, we were curious about Saajid. We visited him on 8<sup>th</sup> June'19 to see how he was doing. The family was staying at the same house in Sitamarhi in Bihar. Saajid has a big family of seven siblings and his parents. His father works in the village court, a couple of his sisters are married. His brothers are also doing well. One of them is an advocate, two are serving in the army. So, we found that the family is closely-knit and is financially stable.*

*So, what is Saajid doing? Saajid is enrolled in a nearby college and is studying in 2nd year BA. What more? **He has won state-level awards and is now a national level kabbadi player.***

*Saajid shared, **"I am thankful for SATHI's help. It is because of them that I am now with my parents. I was interested in kabbadi and since my 9<sup>th</sup>, I began pursuing it. I can say that now I am a good player. This success of mine wouldn't have been possible without the support of my parents. I am grateful to them and wish everyone has parents like mine."***

*Saajid's mother shared, **"We still remember SATHI's help and are grateful for the same. It is for them that we got back our child, safely. Saajid never left home like that. He studied well and has now become a national level champion. If SATHI had not helped, then it is difficult to imagine where my child would have been today. He has now made his parents, proud."***

### **53. Mohd. Faisal- A tailor today**

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Not every child maybe academically oriented. But that does not mean he/she has no other talent. Here is a case of Faisal who has excelled in an area beyond education.

Our outreach worker met Faisal at Kanpur railway station in February 2008. He was 12-year-old and was studying in class 4. Faisal was convinced that SATHI would help him and came to the shelter with the outreach worker.

In the shelter, he told the counsellor that he wasn't interested in studying. He said his parents often scolded him for not attending school. That day his mother has beaten him and in anger, he had left his home without informing anyone. When asked what he would do next, Faisal said he had arrived Kanpur intending to work.

The counsellor spoke with Faisal at length and explained to him the perils of staying away from his parents and family. Faisal understood that he was "at-risk" and gave his family's details. In a few days, his parents arrived. Faisal's parents informed us that he had run away from home once before as well. But he had come home in a few hours. However, when this time he didn't return they got worried.

Faisal's parents were advised not to scold or force him to study since he was not very inclined towards schooling and education. They were also asked to let him pursue a skill of his choice.



For a year, we followed up over the phone. His parents told us that he had dropped out of school but was learning to sew in a local tailor shop.

When we visited Faisal's home as part of this study, we met the rest of his family but not him. We were informed that Faisal was married and lived in Shuklaganj, Kanpur where he worked as a tailor. Faisal wasn't very close to his parents. He earned enough to support himself but was unable to support his parents. His father also mentioned that Faisal's job wasn't very stable.

His mother told our SATHI staff, **"SATHI is doing fabulous work by reuniting the children with their parents. We are very thankful to them who gave our son back to us."**

#### ***54. Sushil- Aspiring Ola cab driver***

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The winters of Kanpur can be freezing. It was on one such cold December day that we met Sushil at the railway station. When the outreach worker spoke with him, he said he wasn't interested in studies and had run away because his father had beaten him. Sushil was also of the opinion that he would find some work in Kanpur.

Touched by his frankness the outreach worker asked Sushil to come to the shelter. Sushil agreed.

During counselling he told the same story. The counsellor explained to him the importance of education. Also, he was told why he should stay at home with his parents. Sushil shared his family's details but was still reluctant to study.

The team traced his family and after four days they arrived at SATHI Kanpur shelter. They were happy to see Sushil, safe and sound. Parents also expressed that they wanted Sushil to study and progress in life. Sushil agreed to the counsellor and his parents and the family left for their home in December 2008.

In 2019, Sushil was one of the boys we wanted to visit and see how he had fared for himself.

We got to know that Sushil's father was a farmer and he had 3 siblings. His parents said that when Sushil completed class 6, he dropped out of school and started helping on the farm. As he grew, he started showing interest in driving. He learnt to drive and decided to be a full-time driver. Sushil was now perfecting his skills and aspired to be a cab driver with OLA.

His parents said that Sushil was doing well, and they are happy with his choice of profession.

Sushil's parents shared, ***"We are very thankful to SATHI that they found our child, took care of him and reunited him with us. After that incident, we took more interest in his likes and dislikes. This brought us closer. We also allowed to decide for himself and supported him. Yes, we also corrected him when we felt he wasn't making the right decision. Our relationship with all the children improved after talking to the SATHI counsellor. We cannot even imagine where our child would have been without the intervention of SATHI. Thank you so much."***

#### ***55. Akhilesh Kumar- working as a pot seller***

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When we come across so many children who run away from home, we wonder with what faith do they take this step? Is it the belief that the universe would take care of them or are they so overwhelmed by their situation that they act without thinking!

12-year Akhilesh Kumar was wandering on the platform of Kanpur railway station when he was contacted by SATHI outreach worker. In the conversation, he told that his mother scolded him for taking bath in the river and going out of the home without informing her. In anger, Akhilesh decided

to leave home and go somewhere and that was how he landed at Kanpur station. Akhilesh was told about SATHI and its work, he agreed and came to the SATHI shelter.

Akhilesh was amazed to see so many kids in the shelter. Akhilesh told our counsellor the same story. He said he went to the river to bathe without informing his mother. Also, he returned home late. His mother was angry that he hadn't informed her and scolded him. This, in turn, angered Akhilesh and he decided to leave home.

It was explained to Akhilesh that his mother would have been worried since he was away from home for so long. So, her anger was justified. He was also told that children who were alone could be solicited by people with wrong motives. Slowly, Akhilesh realised that running away wasn't the right thing to do. He shared the number and address of his parents. The family was traced, and they arrived at the shelter. Akhilesh was their elder son and they were very thankful that he was safe and taken care of. On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Akhilesh went back home promising he would not run away again.

We followed up with his family over the phone for a year. In this time, itself Akhilesh had dropped out of school and was either helping his father at the farm or his mother at home.

A decade later we were curious to see how this straightforward boy who had dropped out of school was doing. We visited Akhilesh's home on 11<sup>th</sup> July' 19.

On meeting his parents, we were informed that Akhilesh lived and worked in Bangalore. They told us that Akhilesh had gone to Ludhiana and worked in a garment company for two years. After this, he moved to Bangalore and was working as a pot seller.

Akhilesh has taken responsibility for the family and supports them financially. Some of his siblings are still in school and are doing well.

Akhilesh's parents told **that they were very thankful to SATHI who reunited them with their son. They wished the organisation the best and expressed that no parent should ever grieve or be separated from their child.**

### ***56. Shivam Singh- preparing for civil services***

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*Children running away from home under the influence of their friends is very common. This is the story of 14-year-old Shivam who did the same. Shivam and his friends were loitering in Kanpur station when a SATHI worker spotted them. A conversation was initiated. We narrate to you only the story of Shivam from the whole group.*

*Shivam had run away from home under the influence of his friends. They thought they would roam the city for a few days. Shivam was told that his action could harm him and was got to the shelter.*

*During counselling it was clear that Shivam had no "troubles" at home but got carried away by his friends. It was explained to him that he could be accosted by abusers and people who employ child laborers. Shivam realized he had made a mistake and shared his father's number. He was reunited with his family the day after he was contacted at Kanpur railway station.*

*Based on the address we had in our records we visited Shivam's home a couple of months back. Turned out that it was his maternal uncle's home. He said that Shivam stayed with him*

*for one year but later went back home. He also said that after the Kanpur incident, Shivam was a changed boy and never attempted to leave home again.*

*We again made a visit. But this time it was to Shivam's village. We met both Shivam and his mother. They were warm and spoke well with SATHI staff. Shivam's mother said that he was always an obedient child but that one day he got carried away by his friend's.*

*Shivam has not only completed his schooling but he is also a graduate with a degree in science. He is currently preparing for civil services and other competitive exams.*

*Shivam and his mother were very **thankful to SATHI for encouraging Shivam at that age, because of which he came on a right track and now is working towards a bright future.***

### ***57. Titu Kumar- Sells water at the railway station***

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In September 2008 we came across Titu. He looked scared and lost. When the outreach worker spoke to him, Titu said that he had reached Kanpur by mistake and wanted to go back home.

Titu was bought to the shelter. He told the counsellor that he was studying but left school to help his mother. His father had left them, and his mother was raising the family single-handedly. He said that he usually sold water bottles at the railway crossing or on the platform. However, on the day he was found, Titu had climbed the train thinking he can sell more bottles and earn some extra money. Unfortunately, the train started and Titu reached Kanpur station.

Titu shared his family details and a family member came and took him back home.

We visited Titu in July 2019. Titu lives with his mother. She told that Titu was her only support. After her husband left them Titu helped her a lot. She mentioned that his elder brother was married but he had left them and lived separately.

Titu still sells water in trains and is managing to earn a decent living. Titu's mother also mentioned that he was not well some months and had some stomach related problem. He was treated for the same and is doing well now.

During the conversation with SATHI staff Titu's mother became emotional and with her wet eyes shared, **"After my husband left us, Titu is the only support who is helping me. Titu is a very responsible child and at a very small age, he understood his responsibilities towards family. He had to drop his school to earn money, but he never blames me. May God give every parent a child, like Titu. I am very thankful to SATHI who bought my Titu back to me 10 years before. I cannot imagine my life without my son."**

### ***58. Sunny alias Shobhit Kumar – the lone warrior***

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11-year-old Sunny was wandering at Kanpur station, looking scared and his eyes conveyed that he wanted some help. When the outreach worker spoke to him, Sunny said that he had gone to his sister's home. But, on the way back he lost his way and reached Kanpur station. Sunny was brought to the SATHI shelter.

At the shelter Sunny shared the same story. He said he had 5 siblings and that his mother had passed away. Since, this was the case of a lost child not much counselling was needed. Sunny shared his address readily, the family was traced, contacted, and his father came to the shelter to take him back home.

So, in 2019 we wanted to see how Sunny was doing in life. We met Sunny in his village. But, of what he said his life seems to be filled with sorrow. Sunny completed his education till class 10. But he couldn't study beyond that because of financial issues.

His father had passed away some 5 years back. His sisters were married and brothers working. He had no support from any of his siblings. He lived with his uncle and drove his uncle's van. On day's he has work he is paid 150-200 rupees.

Sunny said that he went in search of jobs to Delhi and Rajasthan but never got a proper job. He still had the desire to study but no means to pursue his dreams.

It felt that life was being unfair to Sunny. Lastly Sunny said, **"SATHI is doing a very good job, uniting the lost children to their family. This type of organization has to be there all around the country."**

### ***59. Mohd. Mousim- Working in Gujarat***

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On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2009, our outreach worker met 13-year-old Md. Mousim at Kanpur railway station. A conversation started between the two. Mousim was another one of those children who had run away from home because his mother had scolded him for not attending school. He said he lived in Salempur, a village far from Kanpur.

Mousim was a quiet child. During counselling, he told that he wasn't interested in studies due to which his mother scolded him that day and he decided to leave his home. Mousim was a difficult case for the counsellor. We had to speak to him regularly and motivate him. After many sessions, he agreed to share the contact details of his family.

During reunification, we advised the parents to be more mindful and not force Mousim to study or do anything against his wishes.

Post reunification the team kept a regular follow-up via phone, and it was reassuring to hear that Mousim was continuing his education.

A decade later we decided to visit Mousim. We visited his home in Salempur village of Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh on 4<sup>th</sup> July'19. We met his parents and three siblings. They said that Mousim continued his schooling for a couple of years but eventually dropped out of school. He initially helped his father at the shop. However, after a few years, he got a job in Gujarat and was working there.

The parents aren't aware of the work that Mousim does, but they said he visited them thrice a year and also contributed financially.

Mousim's parents told the SATHI staff, **"We could remember the day when Mousim had left home. We were worried. The call from SATHI was the happiest moment we had in those trying times. The few days that he spent there was life-changing for him. When he came back his behaviour changed for the better. He was nice to his siblings and even the neighbours. Over time he has also become more responsible. We thank SATHI for turning our boy into a new leaf."**

### ***60. Manoj Kumar- Learning work in Motor Garage***

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12-year-old Manoj kumar was found roaming at Kanpur railway station when SATHI outreach worker contacted him. During the conversation with the staff, Manoj shared that his mother had scolded him for not doing his homework and studying well due to which he left home and thought to find some work and came to Kanpur railway station.

For Manoj's safety, he was brought to SATHI shelter. There he shared to the counsellor that his father works as a singer in devotional ceremonies (Kirtan singer) and mother is a housewife. They were 7 siblings and he lived in Balram das village Orai, UP. He said that he left home because his mother scolded him and hadn't informed anyone.

Now, away from home Manoj was scared and shared his family's details. The family was contacted, and Manoj was also advised not to leave home and to listen to his parents.

After a decade we decided to visit Manoj at home. The visit was conducted on July 2019. The family still lived there. We met Manoj's parents who informed us that after coming back from Kanpur, Manoj was a changed boy. He listened to them and never attempted to run away from home.

Manoj studied up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard. He then did odd jobs. Currently, Manoj is working in a garage in Fatehpur and learning to be a car mechanic. He has been in this job for the last 3-4 years.

His mother got emotional, thinking about the decade-old event. She said, **"We were desolate when Manoj left home and there was no news. SATHI gave our son back to us like God. Thank you so much and keep doing this work."**

### *61. Priyank Pandey – Studying Pharmacy*

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We meet runaway children very often but seldom do we come across a case of kidnapping. But yes 10 years back our personnel in Kanpur encountered one such case as well.

12-year-old Priyank lives in Farukhabad. He was studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. One day he stepped out of home to go and study in his aunt's house. While he was going to her place, he was drugged and made unconscious. When Priyank gained consciousness, he found himself in a train. At the next station, Priyank escaped. He was scared and disturbed when a SATHI worker met him.

It was clear from Priyank's story that he was kidnapped. For his safety he was immediately taken to the shelter. Priyank was restless and wanted to go home immediately. He shared his family's details. SATHI also started the process of tracing his family with the help of the police.

Meanwhile in Farukhabad Priyank's family was searching for him. When it was late in evening and Priyank didn't return home, his parents went to check in Priyank's aunt's place. When they found that Priyank had never come there, the panic button was triggered. The family searched in all close-by places for Priyank. Finally, when they did not find him, they lodged a complaint with the police.

Eventually SATHI contacted the Farukhabad police station and told them that Priyank was with them. The police in turn informed Priyank's parents. Priyank's parents were overjoyed that their son was in safe hands and immediately came to take their son home.

When the SATHI staff asked Priyank's parents as to who the kidnappers could be, they were clueless. Priyank belonged to a simple, middle class family and were farmers by profession. They said they had no enmity with anyone and did not suspect anyone too. SATHI advised the family to keep an eye for kidnappers in the village. Priyank's family was very happy that they found their son and thanked SATHI profusely.

When we visited Priyank's home a month back we met Priyank's family. When the SATHI personnel introduced himself, they were overjoyed and very welcoming.

Priyank's father said that the day Priyank was kidnapped was a dark day. They searched for their son a lot and when the call from the police came saying Priyank was safe we were very happy and thanked God.

Currently, Priyank is pursuing a degree in Pharmacy. His parents kept thanking SATHI for finding their son and returning him safely.

## ***62. Anil Kumar- an electrician and auto driver***

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We often wonder why children lose interest in studying. Is it a failure of the system or some shortcoming in the home environment? April 2008, we met one more boy who wanted to quit studying and start working. We see children doing this at all times, but this little boy had travelled 200 Kms to reach Kanpur. Here is this story.

Anil Kumar was sighted at Kanpur station in April 2008. On talking, he revealed that he didn't like school and had himself decided to look out for some work. The search got him to Kanpur, which was 200 km away from his village Sikandarpur in Kaushambhi district of Uttar Pradesh.

Anil told us that his father was a farmer and mother was a homemaker. Anil had 7 siblings of which only one was older than him.

At the shelter, the counsellor pointed out to Anil the risk of being alone and how child abusers may accost him. He was also told how education was good for him and advised that he should continue with his education. The fact that he could be accosted by abusers rattled Anil and he shared the contact of his parents.

Within a few days, he was reunited with his family. We followed-up for a year with Anil. In that period, he was still attending school.

Anil was one of the boys shortlisted to meet as a part of this study. We travelled the distance of 200kms in July this year. Since we were unable to find his home, we asked for directions from the Panchayat head. He directed us to his home and also gave his uncle's phone number.

On reaching Anil's home, we met Anil. But his parents were away working in their field. Anil gave a lukewarm response to the SATHI staff. He said that he completed education up to class 6. After that, he learnt electrical work and worked as an electrician. He said that he was often called for work in his village and the neighbouring village too. Anil also drove an auto in his spare time. The SATHI worker was happy to know that Anil was doing well.

Since SATHI's staff couldn't meet Anil's parents he called his uncle. The uncle spoke well but said that he didn't like Anil and his father. He felt they were cunning and kept less contact with them. Well, this could be a family issue. All we care is Anil never left home again and is earning his living honestly.

Anil shared, ***"It was a big mistake I made that I left home without informing anyone and went out in search of work. Anything bad could have happened to me. But with God's grace, I met SATHI who supported me and bought me back home. I am thankful to them. None of the children should do what I did. They may not be lucky like me!"***

## ***63. Surendra Pal- the story of a truck driver***

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In April 2008 another boy who was contacted by one of the SATHI outreach workers was Surendra Pal. He was 14 years old. When spoken to, he gave some vague reasons for being alone at Kanpur station. The outreach worker was sure that the reason wasn't true and convinced Surendra to come to the shelter.

At the shelter, the counsellor spoke to Surender and after a few sessions, he revealed the truth. He said he had to help in household chores which he didn't like. One day he was asked to pluck chillies



from his farm. While doing this he met his friend Nadeem. They both thought they should find a job and earn more money. They thought Delhi was the best place to find a job.

Hence, they decided to leave at that moment for Delhi without informing anyone. However, enroute his friend got separated and thus Surendra was found loitering alone at Kanpur station.

Surendra was then studying in class 8. The counsellor told him that he should first study and then think about working. Also, he was made to understand that he was “at-risk” without any adult supervision. Surendra arrived at the SATHI shelter on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and was reunited with his family on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

During the period of the annual follow up Surendra was attending school regularly.

When we reached Surendra’s home for the study, his mother was wary of SATHI staff. She refused to talk and went away inside the home. The neighbours gathered and Surendra’s sister came out to talk to us. The SATHI staff recounted the 10-year old incident and said we just want to know how Surendra was faring. After much coercion, his mother came to talk but it was obvious that she was scared and reluctant.

At first, Surendra’s mother refuted that he had ever run away. We waited patiently leading her into the conversation. Then slowly she started revealing that Surendra completed his education till 10<sup>th</sup> and left for Kanpur. Currently, Surendra was working as a truck driver. She also said that after that incident Surendra never ran away from home.

We had a telephonic conversation with Surendra where he said, **“I am very happy that SATHI still remembers me and have come to my home all the way long after so many years. I am feeling sad that I could not meet you today but I will meet you again.”** He also said that **“Children should never leave home without informing their parents because apart from the fact that parents are worried, they can come to other harm as well. Thank you for all the help you provided me at the shelter. I am very much obliged.”**

#### ***64. Md. Shamshad- Ran away from home***

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Shamshad (14 years) was wandering in Kanpur. He didn’t look scared but since he was young and alone, the SATHI outreach worker struck a conversation with him. Shamshad said that he had left home with a friend, but he got separated from him. The SATHI worker felt the child was not being completely honest so he got him to the shelter.

In the shelter, Shamshad told the counsellor that he had left home twice previously. He said he liked to roam around and see new places. Shamshad was counselled and he agreed he would never leave home again. He was then reunited with his family.

During the follow-up we visited Shamshad’s home. We met Shamshad and his elder brother. Shamshad’s father said that after he came back home from SATHI, Shamshad ran away once again. He has never come back since then.

When Shamshad ran away for the fourth time the family searched at all places. When they didn’t find him, they lodged a police complaint. But this also yielded no positive result. The family has had no news of Shamshad since the day he left home.

In the grief of her missing son, Shamshad’s mother passed away. Shamshad’s father and siblings live together and Shamshad’s brother is now supporting the family.

Shamshad’s father said, **“SATHI is doing a good job. We got our son back once because of you. But now he is gone forever.”**



We are sad that Shamshad ran away from home. We pray that wherever he is, he should be doing well and leading a clean life.

### ***65. Shivam Kushwaha- Dreams of opening a travel agency***

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Children get carried away in play and sometimes this can take them far away from home. We have seen in movies that a child follows a child and goes far away. This happened to 13-year-old Shivam as well.

The outreach worker who spotted Shivam, saw that he was looking nervous and was searching for someone/something. A chat led to the revelation that Shivam and his friends were flying kites. They followed the kite and reached Kanpur station. In the crowd, Shivam got separated from his friends and was now lost.

It was obvious from Shivam's story that he lived close to the station. But we still had to trace his family. At the shelter, Shivam was still nervous seeing so many children. The counsellor had a chat with Shivam to ascertain the family's status. Shivam informed that his father had a vegetable business, his mother was a school teacher and he had two younger siblings.

Since this was a case of a child getting lost due to his carelessness, not much counselling was needed. Shivam shared his parents contact details and very soon he was reunited with them.

When we met Shivam he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We were curious to see how a boy close to our shelter was doing a decade after the incident.

We visited Shivam's home on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019. His father was at home and informed us that Shivam had taken his sister for an exam in Ghaziabad and would be back the next day. The father was forthcoming and spoke at ease with the SATHI staff.

When asked about how Shivam was after the incident of getting lost, his father said Shivam was very careful and never wandered away after that. He told us that Shivam completed his 10<sup>th</sup> but had no interest in studies after that. The parents thought it was wise to let him decide his future. Shivam told them that he wanted to learn driving and they let him do the same.

He was now working as a driver with a travel company. He also said that Shivam hopes to have his travel agency soon.

Shivam's father shared, **"SATHI is doing a commendable job and we are very thankful to them that they kept my child well at their shelter and bought him back to us. I am very grateful to them."**

### ***66. Saddam- A recycle worker***

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10 years back another child we met was Saddam. He was alone and roaming about the station. He looked lost. When contacted, Saddam said that he had come to Kanpur station to drop his cousin. After that, he didn't know how to go back home.

Saddam was brought to the shelter. Here also he told the same story. He informed the counsellor that he had never been to school. His father was no more, and his mother took care of them. Saddam stayed at home and helped his mother.

Saddam shared his family's details. The counsellor advised Saddam that he shouldn't wander without informing anyone as it was risky. Saddam agreed and in some days was reunited with his family.

After a long gap of 10 years, we decided to see Saddam again and went to his home in June 2019. When Saddam's mother saw SATHI staff she got scared that why we were inquiring about Saddam. She was then reminded about the incident and that we only came to ask about his well-being.

Saddam's mother then relaxed. She said that Saddam was a straightforward boy and somehow got carried away that one day. She said after that day Saddam never left home.

Currently, Saddam is working in a recycle shop. He plans to have a recycle shop of his own one day. His mother was happy with his work.

Saddam spoke to us over the phone and shared, **"I am very happy that SATHI came to meet me after so long. I am very thankful to SATHI and they are doing incredible work."**

### ***67. Jitender- paving his way with a JCB***

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*Peer pressure can do good and bad. Here is the story of Jitender who got carried away by his friends.*

*In the year 2009, our team came across a group of boys at the station. On questioning, they said they had come to roam the city and if they got any work they would also like to work. Knowing that these boys were at risk they were brought to the shelter.*

*One boy in this group was Jitender who was about 14 years of age. He shared that his mother had passed away when he was young. His father used drugs and hence he and his siblings didn't live with him. Jitender lived with his Mama and Mami. He said that he was going to school as well. He also said that he got carried away by his friends and had left home without informing anyone.*

*The counsellor explained to Jitender that what he did was unsafe and that his Mama-Mami would be worried too. Jitender agreed to the folly committed by him and shared the number of his uncle with whom he lived. Jitender was reunited with his Mama and Mami.*

*Two months back we visited Jitender's mama and Mami to know about his well-being. They told us that Jitender was now living with his Mausi and Mause. They said that after he was reunited, after a fortnight Jitender went back home. However, since conditions there were not conducive, he went to his Mausi's home.*

*We took the address of his mausi and went to their place. We met Jitender and also his mausi-mause. Jitender said that his father was still an alcoholic and often fought with them. So, he lived with his Mausi and family. Currently, Jitender is working in a construction company as a JCB driver.*

*He is not earning much. But he still sends some money to his father every month. Jitender's mausa and mausi are also happy with his progress in life.*

*Jitender's uncle said, " **We are really happy that SATHI came to visit Jitender even after such a long time. May SATHI be blessed by God and keep doing this good work.**"*

### ***68. Shravan Tiwari- An entrepreneur***

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The glimmering lights of a city are always a pull for young children. We wonder what attracts them. Because as beautiful as cities are, they come with their share of murky, grey and unsafe people.

In November 2008 we found 12-year-old Shravan roaming in the Kanpur Railway station. He was wearing his school uniform. He was lost but not scared. The outreach worker started chatting with Shravan and found that he was from Kaushambi in Uttar Pradesh.

Kaushambi is around 184 km away from Kanpur and a train journey takes 3-4 hours. Shravan said that he had left home for going to school but instead took a train to see Kanpur. He had come only to see the city. The outreach worker knowing that Shravan was not safe convinced him to accompany him to the shelter.

At the shelter, Shravan settled quickly and also made friends with the other boys. We found him to be active and an extrovert. During counselling, Shravan said that he was studying in grade 6 and left home only because he wanted to see a city.

He was made to understand that staying alone in an unknown place wasn't safe and also that his parents would be worried. Once Shravan shared his family's details, they were contacted. Shravan was reunited with his family from the SATHI shelter.

Now, in 2019 we visited Shravan again. Shravan wasn't there. We met his father who agreed to talk to us. He said that 2008 was the only time that Shravan attempted to leave home. After that, he never attempted to leave home. His father said that Shravan completed his 10<sup>th</sup> standard and started working.

As of date Shravan runs his readymade garment shop in Hyderabad and is doing fairly well. Shravan also supports the family.

His father thanked SATHI and said, **"We were worried when our son didn't return from school that day. We searched in nearby areas and were wondering what to do when we got a call from SATHI informing that he is with you and safe. We thank SATHI for finding our son and wish that you keep helping many more parents."**

### ***69. Akash Sahu- Works in Electric equipment shop***

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Our elders always tell us, "watch your words." You don't know when something will hurt someone. Well, we see such cases very often when a child takes offence to something told by a family member. The intention may be good, but the tone and choice of words may hurt someone.

Akash Sahu's story is a case in example. Akash was spotted in Kanpur railway station. He was alone, looked lost and scared. The SATHI outreach worker asked Akash if he was with someone. Akash said that he reached Kanpur by mistake but wanted to go home.

He was brought to the shelter. When the counsellor asked Akash for the complete story, he said that his brother had scolded him that morning for not studying properly. Hurt, he went out of home and met a friend. The friend suggested that they should leave home. But for that they needed money.

The boys reached the station and Akash's friend suggested that they should collect empty plastic bottles, sell them and make money. Akash while doing this got into a train in the hope of finding more bottles. To Akash's shock, the train started moving. Akash couldn't get off the running train and reached Kanpur. He was regretting his decision and wanted to go back home.

When asked for the family's details Akash immediately shared it. The parents were informed, and Akash was reunited with them.

We visited Akash's home on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019. We met Akash and his mother. Akash now a young man has started working as an electrician. He works in a local shop and repairs generators and electric items. Akash expressed that in a few years he would like to open his own electric shop in the village.

His mother told our SATHI staff, **“Akash with due course of time has become responsible for his duties for his family but has still has the bad habit of taking solution. This is one habit that he needs to get rid of. Otherwise, he is a good lad and gets along well with everyone. I am thankful to SATHI that they bought back my son because of which we are together.”**

#### ***70. Ramesh alias Rajesh – working as a daily wage worker***

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Anger sometimes leads to rash decisions. We met Ramesh alias Rajesh in October 2008 at Kanpur station. He was with a group of friends. The SATHI outreach worker knew that something was wrong.

The worker struck a conversation with the boys, they skirted any discussion but, in the end, they confessed that they had all left home to seek a better future in Kanpur. Well, while we helped the whole group this is the story of Ramesh.

Ramesh was twelve. He was studying in school. That day instead of going to school he went off to his sister's house. This angered his mother who scolded him. Turns out that his mother's act angered Rajesh and along with a group of friends, he decided to leave home and start working.

Ramesh came to the shelter and told the same reason to the counsellor. The counsellor pointed out the drawbacks of his action and also highlighted that his parents would be worried. Ramesh shared his parent's contact details but not before reiterating that he wasn't interested in studying.

Rajesh's parents were contacted and were also advised that they should not scold him or push him for studying. They were told that they should encourage Ramesh to do whatever he wants providing it is not harmful to him, the family or society.

We visited Ramesh's house on June 2019. We were able to meet Ramesh's mother as Ramesh was travelling to his sister's house. She told us that Ramesh studied up to class 6 and the dropped out of school. As SATHI had advised the parents did not force him to continue studying. Ramesh then worked for some days with his father. Currently, he is a daily wage labourer and works in and around his place of stay.

His mother recollected and went on to tell our SATHI staff, **“When Ramesh came back from SATHI he never left home again and was more responsible. When he left home for two days nobody ate food but SATHI bought our child back to us and we will always be thankful to them.”**

#### ***71. Vijay Kumar- making future in Kuwait***

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Vijay Kumar was studying in 9<sup>th</sup> std. when he left home in Unnao and came to Kanpur railway station. He was contacted by SATHI outreach worker. Vijay told that he used to bunk classes in school and his mother got to know about this and was scolded. Angry and disappointed he left home without informing anyone and came to Kanpur. For his safety, he was bought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, Vijay mingled with everyone. During counselling, Vijay shared the same story. About his family he mentioned that his father worked with BSF, mother was a homemaker and he was the youngest of three siblings. Vijay was made to understand that his actions were not right and that his family would be worried. He agreed and shared his family's address. His mother and some other relatives came and took Vijay home.

We visited Vijay's home this year again to check on his progress. We met his father who informed us that **Vijay was settled in Kuwait with his elder brother and works there in a company as an electrician.**

But, his stay after returning continued to be tumultuous. When he came back home, he continued with his disinterest towards studies. Vijay's mother was unable to manage home and pay attention to the children which led resulted in them being irresponsible. Eventually, Vijay's father resigned from his secure job so he could stay at home and help his children.

One day the father also found Vijay loitering out of school and in his anger scolded and hit him. Yet again Vijay ran away from home. The family searched for him but didn't find him. The next day some relatives in Unnao itself spotted Vijay out of their house. Thus, Vijay was rescued the second time.

But, after this incident, Vijay's family did not pressurise him to study. Eventually, Vijay quit studying after class 9. Vijay's elder brother and cousins were working in Kuwait. With their help, Vijay also managed to get a job there. He is earning well and contributes financially to the family.

**Vijay's father thanked SATHI for the help extended 10 years back and told that we should continue helping children who run away from home.**

## *72. Akash Chaubey- wholesale onion seller*

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A seasoned outreach worker easily spots a child who is lost by the look on their faces. One such child we found in November 2008 is Akash.

Akash looked confused and was going from one platform to another when he was contacted by the SATHI outreach worker. It was noticed that he was alone. When approached Akash told the outreach worker that he lost a goat of his relative and in fear of being punished he did not go back to their home and came to the railway station, boarded a train and reached Kanpur railway station. He was then bought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, he told the same story to the counsellor and shared the details of his family who stayed in Azamgarh and relatives who stayed in Delhi. His parents were contacted, and his father came to take him.

A decade later we were curious to know about Akash and visited his home in Azamgarh on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. We met his parents and sister. Akash's father was a bit emotional seeing SATHI staff at their place. They wondered that SATHI still remembered them.

He told after coming from SATHI, Akash stayed with them for one year but then he was sent to his uncle's place in Delhi. His uncle cared a lot for Akash and considered him as his son. Akash completed his education till 9<sup>th</sup> standard and then left as he was not interested in studies.

Initially, Akash helped his uncle in his work. But now **Akash has his own business for onions in the wholesale market.**

Akash is the eldest of five siblings. His father shared happily that Akash was married in May this year. He and his wife both live in Delhi. His father also said that 2008 was the only time that Akash ran away from home. After that, he never attempted any such thing.

His father is proud that Akash is a responsible young man today who is taking good care of his family.

Lastly, he said that **"We will always be grateful to SATHI that they took good care of our son 10 years ago. We are really happy that SATHI still remembered us."**

### **73. Shubham - Works in a Namkeen Factory**

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Peer influence is sometimes so strong that sometimes children follow them blindly. In February 2009 we met Shubham (15 years) at Kanpur railway station. He said that he had left home with his friends to roam around Kanpur city. Since a lone child is always a target, we got Shubham to the shelter.

At the shelter, he told the counsellor that he did not have any intention to leave home and came there just for fun with friends. He was told that being alone attracts the wrong kind of people and would be unsafe for him. Shubham shared his family's details and his family was contacted. He was reunited with his family the very next day.

We did regular follow-up for a year and got to know that Shubham dropped out of school after 8<sup>th</sup> Std. He was not so good and was also disinterested in studies. He was then helping his father in farming.

When we visited his home this June, we met Shubham's parents. They said that after he came back in 2009, he never attempted to run away. But he dropped out of school. The family also said that 3 years after the incident they got Shubham married. He is a father of two daughters and is currently working in Delhi in a Namkeen factory.

We also found during our conversation that Shubham shared a strained relationship with his father. Father and son didn't talk often and didn't care much for each other. His father said that Shubham did not support them financially and whatever he earned was used for his family.

**Shubham's mother thanked SATHI and wished that none of the children should remain out of home unattended. She said the outside world is risky and children are vulnerable and could go wayward easily.**

### **74. Surender Kumar- A Farmer**

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Surender was 15 years of age when he was contacted by SATHI outreach worker at Kanpur railway station. Surender was alone and looked worried as if he was searching for someone. When contacted he shared that he was working in a factory in Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh which did not interest him anymore and without informing anyone he left from there. He wanted to go back to his village in Dapsora, Fatehpur but couldn't get the way. He was then brought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, he shared the same story with the counsellor. He requested SATHI to contact his parents and help him get back home. With the help of the local police we traced his home and he was reunited with his family.

When Surender's father came to take him back home he was advised against sending his child to work. He was also told that making an underage child work was illegal and could attract stringent punishment.

In July 2019 we went to Surender's home. We met the entire family and also Surender's wife. The family lived together. Surendra said that after that incident he never left home nor went back to the factory to work. He now works on their farm.

Surender has a big family and what he earns is not enough, but they all look happy.

Surender's father said, **"We are extremely grateful to SATHI for sending our child back to us safely, we just cannot imagine our life without him. May SATHI continue to do this work forever."**

Surender added, **"I would like to tell all children not to leave their home without informing anyone as anybody can take advantage of them, I was lucky enough to meet SATHI and reached home safely."**

### ***75. Saajid – Server in a hotel***

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On a cold morning in January 2009, our outreach worker saw a lone boy. It looked like he was searching for someone. When contacted he was not answering straight. But the experienced staff knew this was a case of a runaway child. So, he was brought to the shelter.

During counselling at the shelter, he told the counsellor that he was from Musanagar in Kanpur dehat. He said he had two brothers and that their father had left them. The family farmed to earn a livelihood. One day Saajid asked his mother for some money so he could go out with his friends. But his mother refused to give the money.

Saajid devised his own plan. He took some of the grains that his mother had kept at home, sold it in the market and with that money he came to Kanpur. However, he soon ran out of money and was wondering what next when he was contacted by SATHI. When asked by the counsellor if he went to school, Saajid said he had dropped out of school after he completed grade 3.

The counsellor explained to him that his actions weren't right and that he was "at-risk". After a few sessions he agreed to go back home. When contacted by SATHI, Saajid's mother said that they were in no position to travel to Kanpur. So, a SATHI worker travelled with Saajid and reunited him with his family.

In July 2019, we visited Saajid's home once again and met his mother.

The family is still not doing so well. She said that Saajid was working in a hotel as a server. He worked in Kanpur near his home. His income was around Rs 3000 per month and that he came home once a month to meet her.

We were happy that this school dropout boy had found some work for himself and was working hard.

Sajid's mother also said **"SATHI is doing good work, reuniting the lost children back to their family is 'God's work'. Bless YOU"**.

### ***76. Vivek alias Vishal- An entrant in jewelry making***

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11-year-old Vivek was found at Kanpur railway station along with his friend. When SATHI outreach worker asked him about his presence at railway station, he told that he came to roam Kanpur city along with his friends. He said he wanted to go back but didn't remember the way back home, Vivek was scared. The outreach worker got him to the shelter.

When Vivek interacted with the counsellor he told the same story and shared his address. The family was contacted, and they came to the shelter to take Vivek home. Well, this was an easy case for us. The child came from a sound family and basically went out of home out of curiosity. So, the next question for us, what is Vivek doing in present day.

So, in July 2019, we visited Vivek's home.

To our joy we met Vivek, his siblings and his wife and son. So, our young boy was a father!



Vivek told, "I dropped out of school after class 4 as I was not interested in studying. My father works as an artisan in a jewelry shop. I started going with him to work and learnt the trade from him. Today I work as a junior artisan in another shop. I hope to open a jewelry shop one day."

Vivek lives with his parents and siblings and they all are happy together.

Vivek also said, **"I have the most supportive parents in the world, I am really lucky to have them. I thank SATHI for helping me to reach home safely 10 years ago. I am very thankful to them."**

Vivek's father shared, **"It is really painful to feel the separation of a child. We felt that pain 10 years back. I pray to God that he helps SATHI in helping every child who has lost his way, to reach home safely."**

### ***77. etrapal – A Farmer***

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Sometimes children decide on something and want to implement it at any cost. Netrapal was one such child. We met him in Kanpur 10 years back. After initial contact at the station he was brought to the shelter.

During counseling, Netrapal mentioned that he had dropped out of school. He wanted to go out of home and earn money. But when he asked his father for permission his father refused.

Angry with the refusal Netrapal packed a few clothes and left home without informing anyone. He reached Ghaziabad and started working in a Dhaba. He worked there for 4 days and then started missing home. He wanted to go back but didn't know which train to take. He boarded some train at Ghaziabad station which got him to Kanpur where he was contacted by the SATHI outreach worker.

Netrapal was also counselled and the perils of his decision was pointed out to him. He agreed he had made a mistake. Netrapal was from Shadipur, Jarifnagar, Badaun. He shared his family's address and they were traced. His parents came to the shelter and were very happy to be reunited with their child after 10 days.

July 2019, we visited Netrapal's home again to understand his current status in life. We met Netrapal and his parents. We were told that Netrapal now helps his father in the field.

His father shared that after coming from SATHI, Netrapal's behavior had changed. He was more positive and listened to them. As time passed, Netrapal became more responsible and helped him as well. Netrapal's father also said, **"SATHI is doing a very fine job who help lost kids meet their families again. I wish organizations like SATHI are there at all places to help children who run away from home."**

Netrapal shared, **" I am extremely happy that I came back home, and it was all possible because of SATHI. If not for their help I don't know where I would be today. I will always be grateful to SATHI who showed me the right direction. "**

### ***78. Atikul Rehman – Works as a tailor***

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Would you believe if we tell you that some children get lost because they were playing in a train? Sounds so much like a Bollywood movie. But we met a boy ten years back and this happened to him.

13-year-old Atikul Rehman was wandering at Kanpur station looking lost. When contacted by the outreach worker he said that he was from Etawa. He also said that he and his friends were playing in the station and as part of the play got into the train. However, the train started moving. While his friends jumped out Atikul could not and thus reached Kanpur station.

Atikul wanted to go back home but didn't know how to go. He was brought to the shelter.

During counseling, Atikul told the same story. It was explained to him that his actions could have also had bad consequences. Atikul realized his mistake and asked to send him back home. He also promised that he wouldn't play in trains again. Atikul's family was contacted and he was reunited safely.

When we visited Atikul a couple of months back, we found him at the tailoring machine. We introduced ourselves. Both Atikul and his father were very forthcoming and happy to meet a SATHI staff. Atikul's father said that, **"When he came back from Kanpur, his behavior changed. He listened to us and was more responsible. Now he helps me with the tailoring work."**

Atikul has four siblings who are younger than him. He is ensuring that they study. Also, Atikul is taking care of his parents who have some health issues. Overall, today we have a boy who is responsible and caring.

When Atikul's mother met us, she thought we had come to take him away. But when she was reminded of the decade old incident and that we had only come to meet her son she warmed up. Atikul's mother said, **"Your organization is doing a wonderful job by safely reuniting the lost children to their families. Keep up the good work and thank you for bringing my son to me."**

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### ***79. Aftaab- Driver in Saudi Arabia***

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Aftab (14 years) was wandering at Kanpur Central station when SATHI outreach worker met him, Aftab told him that he belongs to Sirayu in Allahabad. He said his father is an alcoholic and beats him. He was often beaten by his mother too. Fed up with this treatment Aftab had left home without informing anyone. He said he wanted to work and make his own living.

The outreach worker got Aftab to the shelter. At the shelter, Aftab shared that he was disturbed by his parent's behavior and didn't want to stay with them. He was firm he didn't want to go back. However, the counsellor told him that he was underage and hence working at this age was not permitted. He was also advised to have a talk with his mother and let her know what he didn't like. After some sessions Aftab agreed to go back home and shared the details.

Aftab's uncle came to the shelter and Aftab was reunited with him. Also, the uncle was asked to speak to the parents and tell them not to physically abuse their child.

In July 2019, we decided to meet Aftab, and see how he is progressing in life. We first called his uncle who had come to the shelter during reunification. His uncle gave us Aftab's current address.

When the SATHI staff reached Aftab's home, his mother was there, and she was very suspicious. Though the staff gave her the background she was wary. So, the SATHI staff asked if he could meet Aftab. Aftab, who was out with his friends was called. When he arrived, he was again reminded of the decade old incident and the staff showed his ID.

After this, Aftab warmed up. He said when he came back home, he stayed there for a few days. Then he went to his aunt's house in Rai Bareilly. There he learnt driving. In some years, Aftab got a job in Saudi Arabia as a driver. He is working there and was at home for a short time. Aftab earns around Rs 20,000/- per month and is supporting his family. Aftab said he wanted to build a pucca house in his village.

Aftab and his mother thanked SATHI for visiting them and still remembering them.

## *80. Shehzad- still without direction*

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There are some children who run away from home time to time as they just don't feel like staying at one place. Shehzad is one of them. During outreach at Kanpur railway station SATHI outreach worker observed that Shehzad was wandering at the station and during conversation with him he told that he belongs to Bhogaon in Menpuri. Shehzad was making excuses during conversations and for his safety he was brought to SATHI shelter.

To the counselor, Shehzad shared that his father asked him to go and work, and when he denied, his father beat him and in anger he left home, boarded train and reached Kanpur station in search of job. He also shared that this was the third time that he left home like this. He was counseled and was told about the risks he could have faced. Finally, he was reunited to his family.

After 10 years we were curious to know what Shehzad must be doing, we decided to visit him. We met Shehzad and his family members. We were told that Shehzad was sitting idle at home and wasn't doing anything. Even after coming back from SATHI he left home twice. Even today Shehzad has no ambition, sense of responsibility or direction. He works in a hotel, cleans dishes, but does not take money. He eats his meals there. But Shehzad is not supporting the family in anyway.

Shehzad's father said, that Shehzad wants to open a hotel. But he doesn't have the motivation to earn the money and fulfill his dream. Shehzad has younger siblings who are doing well. He is the only one who is roaming without purpose.

Shehzad's parents said that they try to talk to him and make him understand, but he doesn't listen to them. He acts as he wishes. Shehzad's parent thanked SATHI for all their efforts.

It is sad to see a child who doesn't seem to have changed over the years! We at SATHI wish the best for Shehzad and his family.

## *81. Anil- Driver in a milk dairy*

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14-year-old Anil was found at Kanpur railway station. It looked like Anil was looking for someone when SATHI outreach worker contacted him, he told he was going to his uncle's house but lost his way and reached Kanpur.

He was brought to SATHI shelter. At the shelter, counsellor had an interaction with him. Anil shared that he did not like to stay at home therefore; he was going to his uncle's place but lost his way and reached Kanpur railway station. He gave his family's address and was reunited with his family the very next day.

After a decade we decided to visit Anil. When we explained about SATHI and the incident ten years back, she remembered and spoke well with us. She said Anil never went to school because they had financial constraints. A few years after Anil came back from Kanpur his father also passed away. Anil used to do odd jobs at home and help his mother.

He then learnt to drive and now works as a driver in a local dairy farm. Anil is earning well, and his mother is happy with his progress in life.

Anil said he still remembers the day when he was contacted at Kanpur railway station, **"I remember the environment in shelter where you took me, and I felt like I am home. I am very grateful to you as only because of SATHI I could meet my family once again. I am happy that you have come to meet me. In future I would like to open my own business of milk."** We wish Anil the best.

## **82. Ankit Yadav – Building his life in Malaysia**

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Ankit Yadav was only 13 years when he was found at Kanpur railway station by SATHI outreach worker. Ankit shared that his father scolded him for stealing money and without informing anyone he left home and came to Kanpur Central station. He didn't know what he would do next. He was then brought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter he found himself comfortable. He shared with the counselor that he came out of home because his father scolded him for stealing money. The counselor explained to him that stealing was bad. He was also told that his father punished him for doing a wrong act. Ankit realized his mistake and requested to be reunited with his family. He was reunited the day he arrived at the shelter.

When we visited Ankit's home in July 2019, we met his mother and brother. She said that Ankit was in Malaysia for the last two years. Now he is working there with a travel agency. She said he would be coming home next month for the first time since he went to Malaysia.

Ankit is doing very well financially and supports his family. His mother said that he has sent home substantial money and their overall condition has improved. Ankit's younger brother is still studying.

Ankit's mother shared, "I am really happy that SATHI still remembered my son. Because of them my son is with me today. I am very thankful to you."

## **83. Mohd. Firoz alias Aslam Raja – Working in Kashmir as Mason**

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In April 2008, we came across 14-year-old Firoz at the railway station. When contacted by the outreach worker of SATHI, Firoz said that he was enrolled to study in a madrasa in Sitamarhi, Bihar but he didn't like it there. So, he ran away without informing anyone.

Firoz was brought to the shelter. He shared the same story with the counsellor. He said he didn't want to go back to the madrasa but would go home. We said we would contact his parents if he promised he wouldn't run away again. Firoz promised and shared his address. The family was traced with the help of the local police and Firoz was reunited with them.

The parents were also advised that they should not send their child back to the madrasa as he didn't like it there.

In June 2019, we visited Firoz's home. We met his brother and uncle. His mother said that Firoz never ran away from home after that incident. She said that he was interested in studying but they didn't have the financial standing to educate their son.

She said, "**Firoz stayed at home for some days. His father is a mason and Firoz learnt masonry from him.**"

As of date, Firoz works in Kashmir as a mason. He is also married and has two children.

Firoz visits home once in 4 months. The family was found to be living happily and content.

## **84. Ashish- studying in BSC 2<sup>nd</sup> Year**

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*Ashish was contacted on a cold December day in the year 2008. He looked lost. When approached by the outreach worker he said that he was going home to meet his mother and got lost. The SATHI outreach worker asked him to come to the shelter.*

*In the shelter Ashish told the counsellor that he was living with his aunt and studying in class 4. But he missed his mother and wanted to meet her. So, without informing anyone he left for his home but got lost.*

*Ashish was from Unnao and requested to be sent back home. While we agreed we also highlighted to him the perils of his actions and how he could have been accosted by bad elements of the society. Ashish agreed to his mistake and said that he would never repeat the same. The family was contacted after he gave their details and Ashish was reunited with them.*

*After a period of 10 years we decided to see Ashish. We visited his home in June 2019. We met both Ashish and his father. We were told that Ashish is currently studying in **in B.Sc 2nd year in Sheikh Mister Miyaan Umar Mohammad degree college in Hardoi, UP.***

*In conversation with Ashish he shared that he was studying a few years back. But due financial constraints he had to drop from education in between. He then went to Karnataka to work in a masala factory. After working there for some time, he went to Jaipur in another masala factory. He used to earn around Rs13000/- per month. After some time, he left the job as he didn't feel like working there and came back home. But the factory manager called him and told that he would give Ashish a hike of Rs 2,000/- if he joined again.*

*Ashish said, **"I went back and after working for around 15 days I had an accident where my hand got crushed in a machine. All my medical expenses were paid by the company and they also gave my family Rs 3,00,000 rupees as compensation and after sometime they terminated me from the company. I came back home. Now I have decided to complete my education and then prepare for a job in the railways."***

*Currently, Ashish is studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year BSc.*

*Ashish also added, **"I would like to thank SATHI for helping me at that tender age of 10 years. I reached home safely. Also, thank you for coming to me and remembering me."***

### **85. Shambhunath Jha studying in B. Com 2<sup>nd</sup> Year**

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We often see children who bunk classes and roam around, Shambhunath's story is somewhat similar.

In 2008 December the outreach staff saw a boy of 12 years of age roaming around. When spoken to, he said that his mother had scolded him for not attending coaching classes. Angry he left home. When asked for the address he could say it properly. He was brought to the shelter.

At the shelter, during his interaction with the counsellor he told the same story and shared the same address. He also told that he didn't like coaching. The counsellor explained to Shambhunath that the coaching was for his own benefit and his parents wanted him to grow in life. Finally, he agreed to go back home. The family was contacted and Shambhunath was reunited.

When we visited Shambhunath last month, he gave us a very cold response. He said he didn't want to talk about the past. When we said we want very little information he spoke reluctantly. He said he is currently studying in B.com second year.

He said he also practiced for some time with a CA. After his graduation, Shambhunath wants to prepare for CA examinations and also for banking exams. He hopes to get a job in a bank.

Overall, Shambhunath didn't seem happy to meet SATHI staff. He was just being cordial. Well, we are happy that he is doing well in life!

### ***86. Nandi alias Anand-Unemployed***

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Nandi a 13-year-old child was found at Kanpur Central station wandering around when he was contacted by the SATHI outreach worker. After talking to him he told that instead of going to school, he went to roam with his friends and had also started chewing tobacco. Angry with his behavior his mother had beaten him. In retaliation, Nandi had left home without informing anyone.

He was brought to the shelter. The counselor noted that Nandi was a friendly and reasonable child. She explained to him the health hazards of consuming tobacco, the danger of being alone and how his family would be worried. Nandi agreed he had been irresponsible. He shared his family's details and promised he would not stray again.

Nandi's family was contacted in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh and they came to receive him.

When we visited Nandi's home, we met his mother. A lot had changed in the last 10 years. Nandi's father who was employed with the railways had passed away. His mother had got the job and she was now working.

Nandi dropped out of school after class 5. He is unemployed but wants to open a grocery store. Nandi's wedding has also been arranged. (His mother didn't seem very perturbed with his unemployed status.)

Nandi's mother thanked SATHI for finding her son 10 years back and reuniting them.

### ***87. Govind Kumar – working in a tile company***

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This is the story of Govind Kumar. Govind had stolen something from school and his friends informed his father. Angry with his act his father had scolded him. Govind was angry and left home. He took a train and reached Kanpur station.

Here, he met SATHI outreach worker and told his story. He was then brought to SATHI shelter. The counselor had a detailed conversation with him and told him that the act of stealing was wrong, and his father wanted to correct his behavior and hence would have scolded him. He was told that the incident should be taken as a lesson and he should correct his behavior.

Govind realized his mistake and shared his address. His parents came and he was reunited with his family.

In June 2019 when we visited Govind's home we met his parents. They were forthcoming and spoke warmly to SATHI staff. Govind's father said that he never left home again after that incident. Govind studied up to class 6 and then discontinued school because studies didn't interest him.

After he left school Govind helped around at home. He is currently working in Gujarat in a tile manufacturing company. Govind earns around Rs 10,000/- per month and sends money home every month.

Govind's parents are happy with the way his life has shaped. However, he has one vice of chewing tobacco and they wish he would get rid of that too.

Govind's father said, **"Thank you for your help. Only because of SATHI we got our son back. Otherwise we don't know what would have happened to him."**

### ***88. Rahul Kumar- Works at a petrol pump***

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In October 2008 we met 10-year-old Rahul who was unaccompanied. He was contacted by the SATHI outreach worker. When asked why he was alone, Rahul said that he would often bunk school and roam around with his friends. When his father got to know this, he scolded Rahul. In anger Rahul had left home.

Rahul was got to the shelter. During counselling Rahul told the same reason for running away. He told the counsellor that school did not interest him. The counsellor told him that he should tell his parents if education did not interest him. She also told him that being alone he would be the target for many predators who were always roaming around stations.

Rahul was an understanding child and soon realized his mistake. He shared the details of his family. They were contacted and his parents came to the shelter.

The parents were also advised not to force Rahul to study and to treat him with love and care.

When we went to Rahul's home in June 2019, we met Rahul's parents. His father who is a farmer said that Rahul dropped out of school after class 7. After that he used to help around at home and in the farm.

Now, Rahul is working in a petrol pump in Kanpur. He does not earn much and is unable to financially support his family.

Though his parents are happy with how his life has shaped and with his behavior they rue that he does not give any financial help.

His father was thankful to the organization and said that, **"This organization is very good and doing great work. Children who have lost direction in life are guided by you and reunited with their families. May God bless you!"**

### ***89. Mohd. Jishan – Sitting idle at home***

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July 2008, Jishan asked his mother for some school supplies. Because there was a financial constraint, she refused the same. Jishan was being adamant and asked for the school supply again. In anger and anguish his mother hit him. Jishan was hurt and angry and left home to go to his aunt's house in Chandausi.

Jishan reached Chandausi but didn't know the way to his aunt's house. Finally, he boarded a train thinking it will take him home, but he landed in Kanpur station. Now Jishan was lost and this is when he was contacted by the SATHI worker.

Jishan narrated the whole story to the SATHI staff. He was brought to the shelter.

At the shelter Jishan did not need much counselling. He agreed that his behavior was reckless and shared his family's contact details. Jishan was reunited with his parents.

July 2019, we visited Jishan's home. Since it was difficult to find, the SATHI worker went to the panchayat office and asked for directions. The headman of the village shared Jishan's brother's number. Shahnawaz, Jishan's brother gave the directions to reach their home.

When we reached home, we met Jishan's parents. The condition of the family is mediocre. However, Jishan's parents are very disappointed with him. When he came back home, Jishan showed interest towards studies. However, after a few year's the family had to discontinue his education because of



financial conditions. Jishan is unemployed and is at home. He shows no inclination to find a job but dreams of opening a mobile shop.

Jishan's father was a construction worker. Now-a-days due to ill health he is home bound. Jishan's brothers are working and support the family. But, Jishan shows no inclination to get to work.

Jishan's brother Shahnawaz said that he would either sit and waste time or play cricket with the children in the neighborhood.

The SATHI staff who visited Jishan's home felt that Jishan was not mentally sound. This was not discussed with the family.

Jishan's mother thanked SATHI for helping them find their son.

### ***90. Md. Tauhid – Works in a furniture shop***

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Many-a-times we come across children with sharp brains. Tauhid was one such child. But, Tauhid did not use his sharp brain to his advantage. Instead he used it to plan how to run away from home. Read on to know more about Tauhid.

Tauhid had no interest in pursuing education or going to school. His lack of interest led to arguments between him and his mother and she often scolded or beat him. After once such confrontation, Tauhid was very angry. That night he hatched a plan to run away from home.

The next morning, he woke up and packed a pair of clothes in his school bag. He told his mother he was going to school and that he had extra classes. But when Tauhid left home, he went straight to the station and boarded a train which got him to Kanpur.

He was roaming around alone, when an outreach worker spotted him. When asked why he was alone, Tauhid said he had run away. The SATHI outreach worker got Tauhid to the shelter.

At the shelter, Tauhid shared to the counselor how he lied to his mother and came to Kanpur railway station. He also said that he regretted his decision and wanted to go back home. Tauhid was advised to stay at home and he was told about the dangers that a lone child could face.

Tauhid shared his address and was reunited to his family.

When we visited Tauhid in June 2019, we met his entire family. The family belongs to the lower income group. All the children are now grown ups, are working and supporting the family. Tauhid dropped out of school and learnt tailoring.

At present, Tauhid is working with his elder brother in a furniture shop. Tauhid wants to open a tailoring unit and is working hard and saving money for the same.

Tauhid's parents thanked SATHI and said that the organization is doing a wonderful job.

### ***91. Rahul – Working in a factory in Mumbai***

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We met Rahul, a 12-year-old boy from Azamgarh at Kanpur station. He was alone and a child at risk. Hence the outreach worker initiated a conversation with Rahul. Rahul said that his mother lived in Azamgarh and his father was working in Mumbai. Rahul had gone to stay with him. But he got bored and decided to go back home.

Rahul did not inform his father and took a UP bound train. The train came to Kanpur where he got off. He didn't know how to proceed to Azamgarh and hence was roaming in the platform. The outreach worker got Rahul to the shelter.

During counselling Rahul was told that he should have informed his father before leaving. Rahul gave the contact details of his mother. She was contacted and called to the shelter. After counselling the mother to keep Rahul with her for few months both mother and son were sent back.

July 2019, we went back to Rahul's village. Our staff asked for directions to the village head. The village head gave the number of Rahul's brother. Despite of speaking to Rahul's brother we got lost. After contacting the village head again, our staff was given the right direction.

When we reached Rahul's house, we met his mother. She said that Rahul dropped out of school after class 7. After a few years he went to Mumbai and now works there in a factory. Rahul's father runs a sweet shop in Mumbai.

Rahul's mother said that he is addicted to drugs. Neither does he listen to them nor does he help the family financially. Rahul's mother was quite disappointed that her son was not interested in helping the family. Rahul's mother did thank SATHI and hoped that the organization worked for many more years.

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### ***92. Nasim Shah- Sews Mosquito Net***

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A 10-year-old Nasim was found at Kanpur Central station by the SATHI outreach worker. Nasim told the outreach worker that he left home in search of work. He reached Kanpur but was lost as he didn't know where to go looking for a job. He was then brought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, he told the counselor that his father is physically challenged and cannot work. So, Nasim thought he should start working and hence left home. However, in Kanpur he got confused and lost.

Nasim was told that it was illegal for anyone to employ children. He was advised to study hard and then aim for a good job when he grows up. Nasim agreed and gave the details of his family. Based on this they were traced and contacted. When his family arrived at the center, they were also told that they shouldn't send such a small child to work. They were advised to enroll him in school.

After 10 years when we went to Nasim's home, we met Nasim and his father. His father said that due to financial constraints Nasim could not continue his schooling. He helps in household chores and is also working in a mosquito net sewing shop.

Nasim contributes financially to his family. He wants to have a business of Mosquito net.

Nasim shared that, **"I am very grateful to the organization as because of them I was able to reach home safely. I will always remember SATHI and I am very happy that you came to meet me."**

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### ***93. Mohd. Jahangir- Studying in BA (1<sup>st</sup> Year)***

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A 12-year-old Mohd. Jahangir was wandering at Kanpur central station with his friends when he was contacted by SATHI outreach worker. During conversation he shared that he came to station to roam around with his friends. The outreach worker felt that something was amiss and got the boys to the shelter.

At the shelter, during counseling, Jahangir shared with the counselor that his parents had enrolled him in a Madrasa. The maulvi there was strict and often scolds and beats the children for not studying. Tired of the treatment, Jahangir and a few boys ran away from the Madrasa.

The counselor shared the risks he and his friends could have faced at the station. Jahangir realized his mistake and shared his address to go back home. His family was traced, and he was reunited with his family.

After a decade, we decided to visit Jahangir and met both Jahangir and his mother.

Jahangir's mother shared that after coming back from the organization Jahangir son never left home. Since he did not want to study in a madrasa, he was enrolled in a regular school. After completing 12<sup>th</sup>, Jahangir has enrolled for B.A in an open university.

Jahangir said that he wanted to study in a college but couldn't because of financial problems. Hence, he has enrolled in an open university. Jahangir is also working as a compounder with a doctor nearby. Through this he is learning about medicines and in the future, he wants to open a medical shop.

Jahangir and his mother both thanked SATHI for its help and said, "**Organizations like SATHI should be there in every place so that none of the child stay away from his family.**"

#### ***94. Mohd. Navi-A child from camp is now well settled with family***

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Mohd. Navi (13 years) was found at Kanpur railway station wandering around. SATHI worker felt like he was searching someone. He approached Navi and asked him his whereabouts. Navi told him that he wanted to work as his stepmother beats him and he do not want to stay with her. To know more about Navi, he was brought to SATHI shelter.

At the shelter, Navi told the counselor that his stepmother beats him every day and even does not give food. He told that he had run away from home 4 to 5 times. He used to steal money and was also into substance abuse.

The counselor thought it was best to enroll Navi in one of the SATHI camps. In the camp, Navi benefited from the schedule and various sessions. He understood how addiction could harm his health and life. He also learnt how the life of a child living on the streets was, the dangers they faced and the troubles they have.

Navi had a change of heart and decided to go back home. His parents, especially his step mother was counselled to treat Navi well.

After a decade, we decided to visit Navi and see what he was doing. We got to know that he is married now and has a son. He works as a labourer at times as a driver or farmer.

He is living happily with his family and thanked SATHI for remembering him.

#### ***95. Archit- Working in a Saree Factory***

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Archit (11 years) was found by the outreach worker wandering in Kanpur station. He said that he had come with his friends to see the city. The outreach worker felt that he was not telling the complete story and got him to the shelter.

During counselling at the shelter Archit said that three of his friends had convinced him to leave home. But now he felt that he was lured by them into some trap. The counsellor told him the risks that he could face by being alone. Archit realized his mistake and shared his father's number. Archit's father came to take him and he was reunited.

After a decade when we visited Archit's home in Farrukhabad. We met his brother and father. The family didn't seem to be doing well economically. His father used to work as a caretaker in a Dharamshala.

He said that after Archit came back from Kanpur there was a change in him. He left the company of his friends and stayed at home. He didn't show much interest in studies and left school. Now, he is staying in Jaipur with his sister and works in a saree factory.

Archit earns around Rs 6000 per month. He sends some amount to his father every month.

His father also thanked SATHI for reuniting him with his son and the guidance we gave him then. He said that had a positive effect on him and today he is independent.

### ***96. Shivshankar Chaturvedi - Earning as a Pandit***

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Shivshankar Chaturvedi a 12-year-old boy came to Kanpur railway station with his friends to roam around and visit new places in the city. He told this when he and his friends were contacted by the SATHI outreach worker. Shiv requested the SATHI staff to guide them and help them to roam around Kanpur. Our outreach worker got them to the shelter.

In the shelter, Shiv was scared seeing so many children. During counselling he told the same reason for leaving home. He also said that the sight of so many children is unnerving, and he wanted to go back home. The counsellor agreed and made Shiv understand the dangers of being alone and how he could have been trafficked. Shiv understood and promised never to leave home again. Based on the details that Shiv gave his family was contacted and he was reunited.

During physical home visit after 10 years we met Shiv's father. They are a family of pandit's. Shiv's father said after that one incident, Shiv never thought of leaving home. He said that Shiv studied till class 6. After that he started studying Sanskrit and Vedas. He learnt everything needed to be a pandit and has taken over his father's job as a pandit.

Shiv is living in a joint family. The family is happy together. Shiv's elder brother is also working.

Shiv's father expressed his gratitude to the organization for reuniting him with his son.

### ***97. Kanhaiya -A driver***

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For a child, the smallest of the mistakes may look like the biggest of the crimes. Instead of confessing to the mistake, sometimes children get scared and resort to other methods such as running away.

This was the case with 15-year-old Kanhaiya. Our outreach worker met him in July 2008. He was wandering alone. When contacted he was very wary, anxious and scared of talking to the outreach worker. The outreach staff was patient and calmed him down. After assuring Kanhaiya that he would help him, the SATHI staff got Kanhaiya to the shelter.

In the shelter, Kanhaiya opened to the counsellor. He told that he belonged to a very big family of 8 siblings. While playing with his elder brother's mobile phone, Kanhaiya lost it. Scared that he would be scolded and probably beaten also Kanhaiya ran away from home.

Kanhaiya was told that running away from a problem or mistake committed was not the right way to face it. He was told that he should be brave and admit that he made a mistake. He was also told that being alone outside was dangerous and he could face worse problems than that at home.

Kanhaiya agreed, deep down he wanted to go home but was scared. A little motivation and counselling helped him be sure that he would go back home. He shared his father's number. His

father was overjoyed to hear that his son was safe and secure. The next day he arrived at the shelter. Kanhaiya was also happy to see him and they went home.

Cut to 2019, we decided to visit Kanhaiya. However, based on the details we had we knew that his village was very far. So, we decided to call and check before embarking on the journey. The phone numbers of Kanhaiya's family were not in service. So, we contacted a neighbour whose number also we had. The neighbour was unsure of their current whereabouts but gave us an address.

We visited the address given by the neighbour and got lucky. Kanhaiya and his parents stayed at the shared address. Kanhaiya is a young man of 26 years. His father said that after completing class 8, Kanhaiya dropped out of school. He learnt to drive and is now working as a driver.

He is earning well and lives with his parents. His father also told us that Kanhaiya was married and had a daughter.

Overall, Kanhaiya has turned out to be a responsible adult and is doing well in life.

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### ***98. Rana –unemployed and directionless***

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Rana and his friends were found roaming in Kanpur station. When spoken to, like many other children they said that they had come to Kanpur to roam and see the city. The entire group was brought to the SATHI shelter.

Rana told the counsellor that he was from Munai village. He said his father had passed away. He lived with his mother and siblings. Rana was counselled and told about the threats of being alone. Rana agreed to go home and was reunited with his family the day after he arrived at the shelter.

When we reached Rana's home for the follow-up visit, we found that they didn't live there anymore. Through some leads and after speaking to other people, we reached a Dharamshala where Rana and his mother were there.

Rana's mother is well educated and teaches in a village school. She said that Rana's father passed away many years ago due to some health issues.

Rana's mother was worried about Rana. His life was still a mess. She said Rana completed school till class 8. Then he kept roaming and got into bad company. He got addicted to alcohol as well. She said since the last 3-4 years he has given up alcohol. But he has no job and stays at home.

At times the family undertakes some catering contracts and Rana helps with that.

Rana, who was there did not want to meet any SATHI staff and refused to speak to us. It is disheartening to see even one child go wayward. We wish Rana gets a job soon and is able to support himself.

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### ***99. Raju aka Kaptan- Working as a truck driver***

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*Losing a parent at a young age can affect a child emotionally. If such a condition is added with no support from the other parent, the result can be very disastrous.*

*We met Raju aka Kaptan (14 years of age) at Kanpur station. He was alone, but not scared. He was confident but came across as someone who was into some form of substance abuse. After an initial chat, the SATHI outreach worker got him to the shelter.*

*In the shelter Raju was friendly and interacted well with other children. During counselling he shared his story which was quite sad. Raju had lost his mother some years back due to a*

*heart attack. His father was a farmer. Raju had seven siblings. Raju hated going to school and often had differences with his father on this topic. Raju also said that he missed his mother, but no one understood him.*

*Raju shared that he had left home many times earlier as well. He also said that he was chewing tobacco, smoked bidi and engaged in some other high-risk behavioral activities. Raju didn't want to go back home and said he would like to stay at the SATHI shelter.*

*Raju was a tough hardened egg and needed more than counselling only. He was asked if he would like to participate in a de-addiction camp organized by SATHI. Raju agreed and stayed in the camp for one month. In these de-addiction camps children are kept away from the substances they are addicted to. The camps have activities throughout the day that keeps the children engaged. They also have a lot of physical activity which keeps them active. Counselling and sharing are key activities as well.*

*SATHI has seen positive changes in children who come to the de-addiction camps. At the end of the camp, Raju agreed to go back home. His father was called and counselled. He was told that his son was out of his addictive habits and needed a lot of emotional support from the family.*

*We visited Raju's home a month back. We could not meet him but spoke to his father. He said that after Raju came back from SATHI, he never ran away. Also, the family was more caring and attentive towards Raju. Raju failed class 5 many times after which he quit studying. Raju is currently a truck driver and works with his brother for a transport company.*

*We had a long conversation with Raju over the phone. He said, **"I was never into studying and I love what I am doing now. The month that I spent at SATHI changed my life. I gave up my addictions and never left home again. My family was also supportive and caring. I remember my joy filled days at SATHI and thank you for giving me a direction in life. Thank you for everything."***

#### ***100. Sanjeev alias Sandeep- Works in Delhi as a Labourer***

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Sanjeev was found at Kanpur railway station alone. When our SATHI outreach worker contacted him, he told that he was not interested in studies and wanted to work. So, he had decided to go to Delhi to work and was waiting for a Delhi bound train. Sanjeev was hungry and asked for food. The SATHI staff got him to the shelter.

At the shelter, he shared with the counselor that his name is Sanjeev and he belongs to GadiKisan village. (he had told the outreach worker his name was Sandeep). He ran from home because he was not interested in studies. He thought Delhi being a big city he will get some job. When asked what job he thought he would get, Sanjeev said he may work as a cobbler or clean dishes somewhere.

The counsellor thought that the child seemed pretty sorted about the kind of work he would get. So, she asked him as to what his source for information was. Sanjeev said that he had seen it in movies where young children go to work and then become rich. The counselor made him understand that reel life and real life was quite different. He was told what were the dangers that lurked around.

Sanjeev understood what the counsellor was telling and decided to go back home. He also said that he would not leave home without informing anyone. Sanjeev's parents were contacted and he was reunited with them after 3 days.

After 10 years when we visited Sanjeev's home, we met his parents and siblings. Sanjeev now lives in Delhi with his wife and children. He works there as a laborer.

Sanjeev's parents were extremely happy to meet SATHI staff. They were happy that SATHI remembered children they had reunited after ten long years. They blessed SATHI and appreciated its work.



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