

CASE STUDY

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Introduction: This case study was prepared as a part of the 15 day volunteer program. I made this case study from the testimonies, feedbacks and personal experiences I gathered while acting as a regular and dedicated volunteer. This is my first attempt at writing such a piece so please excuse my non expertise. I tried my best of selecting 2 cases which had the maximum amount of contrast. During these 15 days I picked up a lot of information and the technical know how of the working of night shelters.

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Methodology: Techniques and methods employed by me were:-

1. Direct personal investigation
2. Direct personal interview
3. Direct observation

CASES

CASE 1:

Relevant background information:

Name: Tony

Age: 35

Status of employment: Unemployed

Alcoholic: Yes

Substance Abuser: No

Findings:

Tony is from Madurai, came to Delhi in search of employment. Has been working as a day laborer ever since. Tony is completely aimless, does not know what to do with life. He has apparently abandoned his family members who are still living in Madurai in the hope that someday he might return. He met with an accident 3 months back and has been bed ridden since then, unable to work or feed him self, relying on his friends to do help him with feeding and other activities. He told me that the person who ran over him left him for the dead. All this might make his condition seem quite pitiable and cruel but everything is not the way it seems.

In reality Tony is a complete pathological liar and a charlatan. He is also educated but hides this fact to draw sympathy and kick away any chances of finding employment. He extorted 50000 rupees from the man who ran over him and even made him pay the money needed for treatment. He has become used to his lifestyle of

roaming around and getting free things from other people and now he even has a free residence in the form of a night shelter. He is severely depressed and has resorted to alcohol he drinks quite an amount of cheap liquor. He turns down any offers of employment made to him by quoting that his limbs are broken. He wants a regular life without earning or being productive. It is said, “Homelessness is a state of mind”, in his case it turns out to be true.

Suggested remedies

1. Counseling- He needs to be counseled by some psychiatrist to help him recover from his taking things for granted attitude so that he may get over his aimlessness.
2. Contacting his family- His family should be contacted and be counseled with. So that rehabilitating him gets faster.
3. Getting over alcoholism- He should be admitted to a De-addiction centre or some addiction rehabilitation centre.
4. Employment- He should get employment (not labor intensive) to get rehabilitated into the mainstream.
5. Not admitting him into the night shelter once he gets well.

CASE 2:

Relevant background information:

Name: Amar

Age: 22

Status of employment: Employed

Alcoholic: No

Substance Abuser: No

Findings:

Amar is from Maharashtra after completing his higher secondary education; he wasted his time working as an amateur musician in the state. Then he migrated to Delhi with his father who works as a doctor with an N.G.O. He wanted to become independent so stopped staying with his father and instead took to living in a night shelter and enrolled in a distance learning course from Indira Gandhi National Open University. He started teaching English to children from slums to earn his living but later found a stable job in being a caretaker for the same night shelter he stayed at. He still wants to pursue a career in music and is working on honing his musical skills. He plays a guitar can write his own lyrics and he sings too. After living with the homeless for quite some time he was moved by their stories so started drawing inspiration from them to write songs. He wants to become a successful artist meanwhile he also wants to help homeless and needy people.

Suggested remedies

1. Counseling- Someone needs to guide him with regards to his career as he is still not old enough to look out for him self.

Comparison

1. Tony is a middle aged man in his late 30s while Amar is young and ambitious.
2. Tony has a habit of running away from responsibilities as he left his family in Madurai and doesn't give them any money for sustenance. On the other hand Amar looks after himself and wishes to help other people as well.
3. Tony is alcoholic which hampers wth his decision making while Amar has no such problem and has clarity of thought.

Conclusion

Night shelters seem to be increasing while the homeless remain the same. Night shelters are succeeding at giving shelter to the homeless but are failing at rehabilitating them. Each individual should be given specific attention to address his/her problems, problems that made him/her a homeless in the first place. These problems are completely different for different people, some can be

solved easily while others are complex in nature. Special attention should be paid to alcoholics and criminals as these people have a potential of damaging their surroundings. Instead of taking the easy way out by giving them a roof, night shelters should be places where they get rehabilitated into the mainstream.