

## **Muslim Youth Helpline**

### **The Context**

The single most significant assertion in the Sachar Committee's detailed exploration of the status of Muslims in India is that "While Muslims need to prove on a daily basis that they are not anti-national and terrorists, it is not recognized that the alleged appeasement has not resulted in the desired level of socio-economic development of the community." On the contrary, the report points out that "the community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development". The report adds that "by and large, Muslims rank somewhat above SCs / STs but below Hindu OBCs [Other Backward Classes], Other Minorities and Hindu General [mostly upper castes] in almost all indicators considered."

In India, the Muslim population is more urban than the general Indian population. While some two-thirds of Indians live in the villages, the percentage is thought to be inverted for Indian Muslims, with most living in urban and semi-urban areas. Among big Indian cities, the highest Muslim percentage is in Hyderabad (40%). The other cities with significant Muslim populations are Mumbai, Srinagar, Bhopal, Lucknow, Kolkata, Aurangabad, Delhi and several others.

This observation brings into context the formation of physical and mental ghettos deeply affecting Muslims living in urban areas. It is mostly the Muslim youth who have remained the most vulnerable sufferers of this state of affairs. No serious initiative has been yet developed to address the problems faced by Muslim youth in India.

### **Rationale for a Muslim Youth Help-Line**

A participatory study with urban Muslim youth (men and women) in Hyderabad has established that while they have access to education (usually of a poor quality), they lack for guidance, a lack of institutional access, and to social networks that could help them gain access to opportunities. They are thus unable to participate in the growth story of India and one of the unacceptable consequences has been that there is a growing degree of alienation from both the mainstream society and the state. We have to also contend with the fact that the negative material, emotional and developmental effects of this alienation is being exacerbated by larger contextual issues.

It is evident therefore that there is an urgent need for an intervention that helps them in their 'social recovery' by building their human, cultural and social capital. This can best be done by leveraging technology for the rebuilding of social and institutional networks and linkages, dialogue between community and state actors, and recognizing and overcoming trauma/ psycho-social concerns.

We propose to do this by establishing a 'hub and spoke' hybrid technology model with a Muslim Youth Help-line call centre as the hub, supported by community outreach nodes that serve as spokes.

## **Model for the Proposed Muslim Youth Help-line (MYH)**

The MYH will be a 10-seater call centre working from 10 AM to 6 PM. It will be operated entirely by Muslim youth who will be part of the localities in cities where the project will be implemented. It will have the initial capability of handling 600 calls a day and can be scaled up as required

The following services will be provided by the proposed MYH:

1. Career Guidance: education, vocational training,
2. Access to Government Schemes/Programmes
3. Placement Services
4. Facilitation for Certification
5. Institutional Linkages (Financial etc)
6. Faith Sensitive Counseling (women's issues, health issues, legal issues, identity, security)

In addition to the services provided the by the call centre the MYH will provide location based outreach services in co-ordination with NGOs/CBOs/Ward Offices.

These would include:

1. Advise by Trained Lay counsellors
2. Skill Registry
3. Life skills and Employability Training

## **Indicative Budget**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost in Rs.</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>		
1	Hardware +Technology Costs	6,50,000.00
2	Furniture & Fixtures + Deposits (inc. rental)	3,50,000.00
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>		
3	@ Rs.18,000.00 per seat per month for 10 seats (all inclusive) including out reach services	21,60,000.00

The approximate cost would be Rs.31,60,000.00 per annum for each centre.