

## SANKALP – De-addiction Centre for police personnel

*Aarti Bang, (Nirman 4) has started working as psychiatric at SANKALP De-addiction centre started for police personnel in district police headquarters, Gadchiroli, from January 2017. She is telling us about her experience...*

SEARCH, Government of Maharashtra and Tata Trusts in collaboration started a programme against alcohol and tobacco in Gadchiroli district – MUKTIPATH. Objective of this programme is to reduce the expenditure of entire district on alcohol and tobacco by 100 crores in 3 years and also reduce the various substance use and its ill effects on people. In context with the district wide MUKTIPATH programme, the idea was discussed regarding starting a de-addiction centre only for the police and CRPF personnel of the entire district.

The police department is the law and order maintenance authority of the society and addiction amongst the department poses a major threat for any effective deaddiction and prohibition policy. Also setting up a de-addiction programme would help the staff overcome their own addictive behaviors and go on to play a more effective role in societal alcohol control themselves. The police department taking the lead in deaddiction would send a powerful message to other departments and to the population at large.

The name of the police deaddiction centre has been named SANKALP KENDRA (SK). We organized a 14 days in-house camp for 25 previously selected police personnel. It included various themes like:

- 1) Why addiction is a disease
- 2) What are the adverse effects of alcohol and nicotine consumption?
- 3) Emotional regulation
- 4) Sexuality and alcohol addiction
- 5) Stress and anger management
- 6) Financial management
- 7) Triggers for alcohol relapse and how to manage relapse

All this information is delivered in ways which encourage participation from patients, engage them in the learning process. Some methods used are - group exercises and games, songs, (sung to the tune of popular music), bodh-katha, panel discussions, individual counseling, experience sharing, prayer, meditation and physical training etc.

My main responsibility in all this is to train the SANKALP team which is part of the welfare office of the police department so as to enable them to successfully conduct and organize the

entire camp, establish a follow up mechanism and guide them at regular intervals regarding technical inputs and other managerial aspects of the camp. Our first camp result has been phenomenal in terms of de-addiction science and therapy. 17 out of 25 patients are sober which is 68% success rate.

### **What I Learned**

SANKALP was my first independent project since joining SEARCH in September 2016 and I was very apprehensive about my ability to conduct and organize the camp. This training is never imparted in medical school or even my psychiatry training. The team here helped a lot and it has been a very amazing experience for me in terms of actually getting to know how the police department works and the hierarchy that they follow. Now, I am trying to understand their problems and for the first time in my life I have looked at the police personnel from a completely different

perceptive. I have realized that I enjoy immensely working and interacting with people- that is my strength that I should build upon. I am learning a lot from the other members of the SEARCH de-addiction team. Initially I was working solely as a psychiatrist, as in I was part of the hospital staff but I was rarely needed to collaborate with them on much. But with SANKALP there's a whole team that's involved. And there's so much fun.



**Aarti Bang, NIRMAN 4**  
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