



A unique programme in Jamshedpur city is helping integrate homeless children into the formal education system and empowering them to lead a dignified life.

## THE CONTEXT

Rag-picking children lugging large bags of trash, sleeping on pavements and struggling with substance abuse may be common in India's cities, but is doubly upsetting in the city planned by Tata group founder Jamsetji Tata. Education has proven to be the most effective route for empowering individuals and Tata Steel has adopted this to create a better life for Jamshedpur's street children.



## KEY CHALLENGE



### ACCESS

Getting access to and winning the trust of the homeless children and their parents/guardians was difficult. The team fanned out on the field to identify the children before embarking on the arduous task of convincing them to join the school, which took several months. It won them over by highlighting the amenities they could enjoy in the school -- food, clothes, indoor and outdoor games, and television.

### RETENTION

As victims of substance abuse, the children were accustomed to a carefree existence, and always keen to escape the school boundaries. It took several months of counselling and involving them in sports and creative activities to help them overcome their addictions and settle down. Once they began enjoying their stay, trained teachers commenced the learning process using interactive study material.

## THE INNOVATION



Masti Ki Pathshala is an innovative programme that works with 100 homeless and street boys (aged 9-15 years), engaged in rag-picking, begging and working on railway platforms and brick kilns, and at risk of ill-health and physical danger. This programme gives their lives a new direction by empowering them through education.

Masti Ki Pathshala helps integrate the children into the formal education system through a residential school and imparts in them the values they need to become responsible citizens.

The programme's unique ambition is to identify such blind spots where the needs of marginalised communities are ignored by urban planning and to end the cycle of poverty and lack of education. Tata Steel plans to create a scalable model to address these blind spots.



## THE IMPACT



Homeless children, who were on track to becoming negative elements in society, now have a more positive direction of learning. Of the 100 boys enrolled, 38 have been mainstreamed into three of the top-raking CBSE English-medium high schools in Tatanagar.

17 students in Kasidih High School got a first division in their annual exam in 2018-19 with many of them securing a distinction in English, Maths and Science.

The transformation in the children is reflected in the positive change in their families and communities. They are already role models for children around them. The project's success has prompted Tata Steel to set up two more residential schools in Jamshedpur.