

Reuniting a Family:

Story of Bidyavati Devi, Bihar

Ms. Bidyavati wife of two husbands namely Mr.Suresh Mahato and Mr.Jagdish. Both are alive as per her and Suresh is living at Bishunpura. She is from the village called Nawada Mathiya, in the area of Jalalpur (Police station), in Saran District of Bihar.

Ms Bidyavati left Nawada Mathiya, her home village and reached Trivandrum, Kerala 7 years ago (2016). She was roaming around the city and found her mentally sick, she was admitted in the Mental Hospital, Perurkada, Trivandrum. She then had the issue of leprosy too. The officials in the hospital treated her for both mental issues and leprosy. Later she got cured. She had been living there till 12-8-2023. But within the span of seven years no one had contacted her or had any details about her.

She did not understand Hindi as she spoke only Bhojpuri. So the hospital officials took the help of their connection with one person from Chhapra, Bihar who understood Bhojpuri and tried to find out location address and police station. They identified the landmark. Her home is near to Daso Jani Mandir, Nayaka Bazar and Shiv Mandir, Jalapur, Saran District.

Networking and Reuniting

The family of Bidyavati was ready to take her home from Kerala. But they did not know the procedures. So they contacted Bihar Migration center. They kept in touch with Dr Fr Prakash Louis SJ, Indian Social Institute, Delhi. Dr Prakash Louis Sj called Fr.Immanuel Koyan and me, PS Antony.

First thing what I had done is that I had visited the hospital twice and found the truth about Bidyavati. I had met superintend, and other staff members including Chronic ward in charge Dr. Jismy Swathi and the psychiatric Social worker, Mrs.Sandhaya. All collaborated with little hesitation.

Later Dr Prakash Louis constantly kept in touch with the family and the brother of Ms Bidayawati Mr.Panch Mahato and his son Mr Akash Kumar decided to come to Trivandrum. I too kept in touch with them. Meanwhile I met the doctor and social worker in the hospital.

Reunion

On 13th August,2023, I got the news that Bidyavati's family would reach by 7am. I was present at 6.45 am. But they came by another train and reached the central station, Trivandrum at 8 am. I received them and took them to the hospital, Perurkada, Trivandrum. Being the second Saturday, some confusion was there, still since due to push, doctor agreed to clear the documents, met Mr Panch Mahato took to Bidyavati. And great REUNION. Bidyavati recognized her brother and they reunited.

Later I took them a hotel and gave them food and made sure they got into the train. Since no direct train from Trivandrum to Chhpra on Saturday. They decided to go to Chennai and from there to Bihar.

The government of Kerala gives some stipend to the leprosy patients and Ms. Bidayavati had leprosy when she had arrived and so she had special amount Rs.12,500/- Her family is also not in poor condition. Her brother had a hotel in Bihar. So happy they rejoined and returned to their own land.

So finally they thanked everyone. I had a sense of satisfaction for witnessing a family reuniting. Big salute to Dr. Prakash Louis SJ, Fr. Immanuel Koyan SJ and all who had involved in the process of rejoining the family members.

PS Antony SJ

16-8-2023