

CASE STUDY

A Migrant Was Found Lost In The Streets Of Thiruvananthapuram



LJMS director and MLW with the migrant (Blue Check Shirt) reunited with his friend

We received a call from the Museum Police Station in Thiruvananthapuram regarding a man who had been discovered wandering the streets without a phone or any kind of identification. After arriving there and conducting additional investigation, we learn that the person is from Jharkhand. He travelled to Kerala with some buddies before being lost and ending up on the streets of Thiruvananthapuram. After he signed a few papers, we transported him from the police station to the All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) Centre near the Trivandrum General Hospital, where he was given a room to remain in and recuperate for the night. He appeared to be psychologically disturbed and in a condition of trauma.

We went out for tea together the day after we checked on him. After getting enough sleep and rest, he gradually began to remember what had happened. He and his buddies had purchased tickets to travel to Alappuzha, where they spent a day or two before boarding a different train to Nagercoil. The Train Ticket Examiner (TTE) arrived in the compartment a short while into the journey since there were no tickets and they were all dispersed. Somehow, through all this chaos, he managed to get to where the train stopped and sprinted out of the station. At that point, he realised that everything he owned, including his cell phone and evidence of identity, had been left in the luggage aboard the train, which was how he got up on Trivandrum's streets.

At this point, he was severely mentally disturbed. He had just lost his mother and was only just beginning to heal. He was also in a new state where he didn't speak the language, had no family or friends, and had cut off his phone, so he had no means of communication. He spent days walking the streets aimlessly and claimed that it was the first time in his life that he had to sleep outside. He also remembers that the realisation of his predicament strikes him when he awakens from slumber and discovers that there is no roof over his head. After following the same routine for a few days, he bumped into a Hindi-speaking employee of a restaurant and requested some food. When they questioned him about how he ended up in this predicament, he tried to explain what he recalled. They phoned the police to assist the man after listening to what he had to say. That's how the museum police station got hold of him.

They had already contacted his family and were investigating the possibility of sending him back home. With the cooperation of Fr. George from Jharkhand and Mr. George Mathew* from Ernakulam, we were able to arrange for someone to fly from Ranchi to Trivandrum. In a few days, one of his family friends arrived in Trivandrum; we picked him up at the airport and took him to AICUF. Thus, the individual was at last reunited with a member of his community. After that, we brought them to the train station, where the zonal hub director accompanied them to Ernakulam, where Mr. George Mathew welcomed them. The following day, they were placed on a train to return to their homeland.

The instance above illustrates several points, including the precarious situation individuals find themselves in as a result of their circumstances, the psychological and emotional toll it takes, and the ways in which we, with the use of limited resources and networking, may assist someone in need. Everyone's combined efforts made it possible for the person to get home safely.

*George Mathew is a renowned social activist based in Ernakulam district.