

This Corporate Professional Quit his Job to Ensure that Nobody in his City Goes by Sohini Dey

A former corporate employee, Goutham Kumar realized that his true calling lay in serving humanity. Meet the man changing lives in Hyderabad.

While most of us struggle to stick to our 9-5 work hours, Goutham Kumar's workday often commences at midnight. The Hyderabad resident and his band of dedicated workers and volunteers are most likely to be found at one of the city's many function halls collecting leftover food items to be redistributed among the poor and homeless in the city. "Nobody should have to go hungry," says Goutham who left behind a lucrative profession to serve the greater good.

Having worked for a number of companies across the country, including Expedia, Goutham switched to working full-time with NGOs in Hyderabad five years ago. "I started my NGO because I wanted to serve others," he says. "But I wanted it to be my profession, not a passion to be followed just once or twice a week. I was sure that this would be my sole purpose." Recruiting the help of family members and well-wishers, Goutham set up Serve Needy in 2014 to assist the impoverished and homeless in the city. Recovering leftovers to feed the hungry, better known as the Anna Daatha programme, is just one of the 14 projects Goutham is presently involved in.

One of his earliest projects, before Serve Needy was founded, was aiding in the rescue and rehabilitation of the homeless from the city's streets. Today it is one of Goutham's pet projects — he has named it Save a Life — and is executed in association with the Telangana Police and government bodies.

Goutham's emphasis is on children and senior citizens. He describes how it is not uncommon for him and his team to bond with those they rescue. "We treat them with respect, like our family members and often they respond with their life stories. We collect them as case studies and then offer them our support."

Serve Needy also reunites the homeless people with their families, following legal procedures to identify whether those rescued may be missing persons. Those found orphaned or alone are given places in shelters and homes including Serve Needy's own orphanage. "We have 22 children living with us, a mix of kids of single parents, orphans, and some who have been rescued from trafficking," says Goutham. Founded in 2015, the orphanage offers the benefits of safe accommodation and education

for these children, and is often visited by well-wishers who celebrate their special days with these kids.

Goutham and his family members, as well as four employees, work with an ever-increasing team of volunteers to aid the poor and homeless. They offer aid for cancer patients—including alternative medicine and birthday parties—at Hyderabad's MNJ Cancer Hospital and Basawatarakam Hospital. They aid government schools, fix pot holes, identify and rescue mentally challenged individuals and even pets from the streets. Serve Needy's special birthday parties in schools, hospitals and old age homes have garnered such a fan following that Goutham even receives special requests from sponsors.

From feeding 200 people daily to undertaking the last rites for those who cannot afford to help themselves, Serve Needy works on a 24x7 schedule. Yet Goutham's zeal is unstoppable. In his latest project, his team has launched a mobile ambulance for the poor. Inaugurated on January 8, the ambulance team is being set up to provide free medical services, emergency picks-ups, and free service for any sudden accidents. "We are aiming at people with serious ailments," says Goutham citing the case of a patient whose wounds were infected by maggots. Serve Needy also extends the ambulance for last rites and help for anyone in need.

Over three years and countless projects, Serve Needy's followers and volunteers are on the rise. The Anna Datha project, now over 250 days old, not only distributes leftovers but now also offers freshly cooked meals sponsored by well-wishers and charitable souls. "We want to serve the needy and inspire others to do the same with our work," says Goutham. "A lot of people like and share our posts on social media, but it takes more to change lives." Goutham urges reactions, for people to come forward as sponsors and volunteers and contribute more proactively to serving others.

Goutham's life is enveloped by his cause and work. He is eager to receive support and open chapters of his organisation in other cities. "I started Serve Needy because I wanted to do my part as a human being," he says. "I don't want anyone to feel orphaned while they are alive."

To contribute to Serve Needy's initiatives, [click here](#) or call Goutham at +919550335994.