

# PERIN & JEHANGIR DAVAR CENTRES AT SHRADDHA REHABILITATION CENTRE

## *An Oasis At Karjat For The Mentally Ill Roadside Destitute*

Parsi are renowned for their charitable disposition. What's more, their philanthropy is seldom restricted to their own community. Take, for example, the Tatas, Godrejs, Jeebhoyas, Petits or Wadias – the secularity of their giving transcends all barriers of caste, creed or religion. This microscopic community has also proved, time and again, that one need not necessarily be rich in order to be philanthropic. After all, philanthropy is not just about 'giving money', it is about 'love for humanity'.

Take, for example, the recent act of philanthropy on the part of a simple and relatively unknown Parsi lady, Mrs. Sheru Hosi Mistry (nee Davar). She did not inherit a fortune nor is she privy to vast disposable wealth. And yet, from her own savings, accumulated by thrift, often bordering on personal deprivation, she has helped establish two special units - one in memory of her mother, 'Perin', and the other in memory of her father, 'Jehangir', at **Shraddha Rehabilitation Centre** in Karjat.



Dr. Bharat Vatwani addressing the audience at the inauguration.



Mr. Hosi Mistry and his wife, Sheru

Shraddha is a non-governmental organization (NGO) addressing the issue of 'the mentally ill roadside destitute'. In India, one can find thousands of mentally ill road-side destitute. However, there are very few organizations which are dedicated to treating and rehabilitating them. One such organization is 'Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation' established by the dynamic and dedicated **Dr. Bharat Vatwani**.

Inaugurations and opening ceremonies are often dull and ritualistic events which leave people cold



Garlanded portraits of late Perin and Jehangir Davar

and unmoved. However, the inauguration of 'The Perin Jehangir Davar' and 'The Jehangir Ardeshir Davar' Memorial Centres at Vengaon village in Karjat, on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007 was something special and inspiring. This was the dream of Late Mrs. Perin Davar which her loving and devoted daughter, Mrs. Sheru Hosi Mistry, fulfilled.

These two spacious Centres - The Perin Jehangir Davar Memorial Centre for male patients and The Jehangir Ardeshir Davar Memorial Centre for the female destitute - are the fulfillment of the dream of Sheru's late parents to help the poorest of the poor. This dream - full of pathos and the struggle to make it a reality - is best captured in

'PHILANTHROPY' - MAY - JUNE 2007

By Noshir H. Dadrawala

Sheru Mistry's own words:

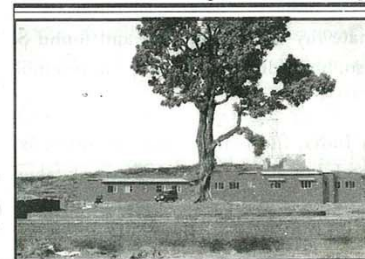
"My mother had a dream to become a doctor and serve humanity. She had a dream to go into the villages and give free service to the poorest of the poor. But her dream remained unfulfilled. In her times, girls were discouraged from pursuing higher studies out of fear that it would ruin their prospects of marriage. My mother often cried before me, 'Sheru, will I die unfulfilled? My heart's greatest desire is unfulfilled.' Though I knew not how I would do it, I promised her that I will do it for her. She would not have lived in vain. It took 19 years of intensive search before stumbling upon Shraddha Foundation. I like to think now, at last, my mother will be happy wherever she is. The Centre will stand as a living testimony that her life's mission has been fulfilled, if not in her own lifetime, then at least, in her daughter's."

**Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation** was founded in 1988, to deal with the mentally-ill roadside destitute who are living off the streets and are left lonely, haggard and stripped of all human dignity. In 1997, Shraddha expanded its services with a 30-bed hospital in Dahisar.



Patients being rehabilitated through agriculture.

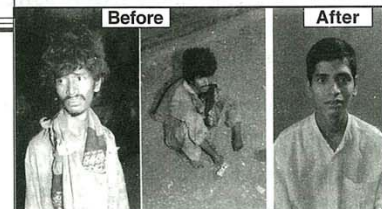
Since its inception, Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation has picked up, treated and successfully reunited with their families over 1,000 mentally ill roadside destitute - **all for free**. Destitute families have been traced to places as far flung as Srinagar,



Two Units at Karjat fully completed.

Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kerala and Orissa. **Shraddha Rehabilitation Centre** has been operational in Karjat since March 2006. It currently houses and treats 50 mentally ill roadside destitute. With the inauguration of the two new Centres, it hopes to house 110 patients.

The Founder of Shraddha, Dr. Bharat Vatwani, is of the view that mental illness is like any other human illness which can either be cured or controlled through a judicious combination of medicines, love, care and understanding.



Sanjay Dhakane before and after rehabilitation.

There are over 20 social workers who help Dr. Bharat and his wife, Dr. Smitha Vatwani, at the Karjat Centre. Those patients who are not accepted by