



PRAJWALA HAPPENINGS

Knowledge → Reflection → Action

Volume 3

Monthly Newsletter

March 2026



“Message from the Founder”

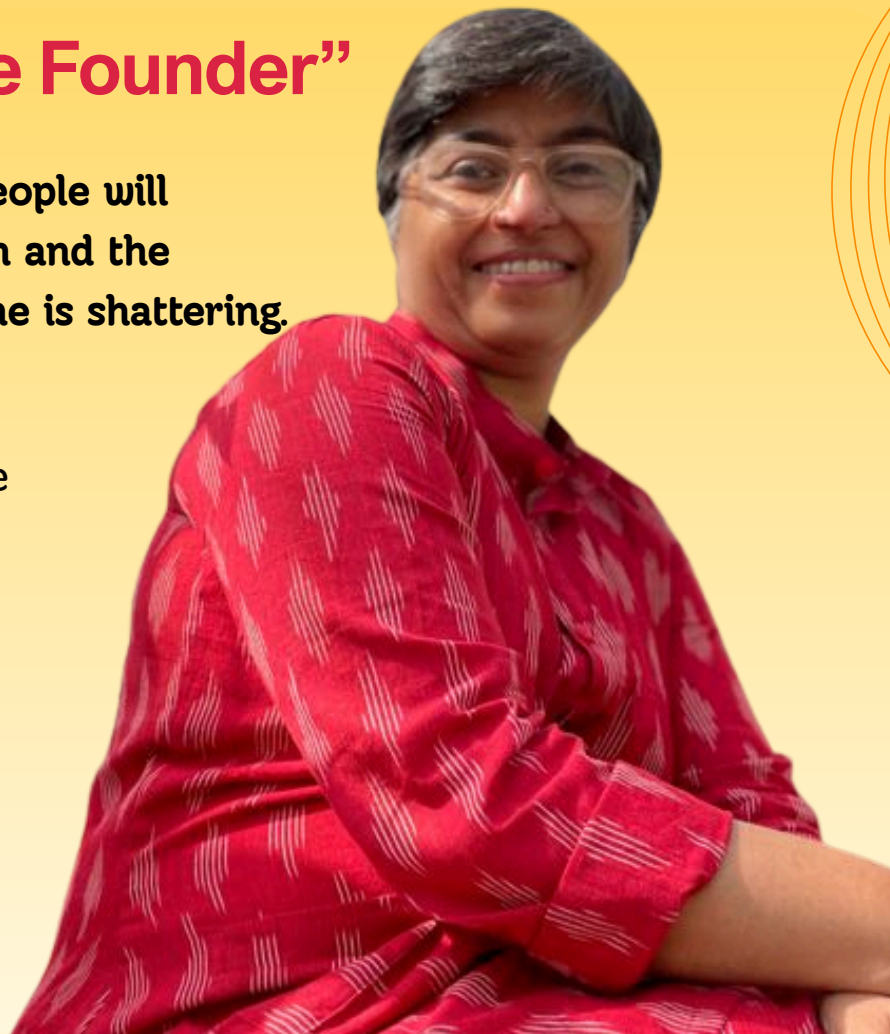
It is March, an entire month dedicated to the International Women's Day. For a greater part of the world, 8th of March and the month has become symbolic ritual time to demonstrate gender sensitivity. Seminars, conferences and several other events are organised with women taking the central seat. Known women and lesser celebrated ones are identified and honoured. It as if in the entire year of 12 months.....

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“Message from the Founder”

.....this will be the only time people will discuss the greatness of women and the number of glass ceilings that she is shattering.

For me personally, it is time for reflection. Being in the space of fighting the worst forms of human rights violation against women and girl children manifested in the form of sex trafficking, this is the time of the year when I evaluate the efficacy of our interventions and how far we have come to combat this problem.



In essence this is a scary month when I have to head on face where we are failing. Over the years the despondency triggered in this period has only increased making me wary of accepting any awards in this month. (I still do accept occasionally some exceptional requests for the benefit it might generate for our mission).

While at one end I am beyond thrilled getting to know amazing accomplished women this month, I wonder whether mere celebrations of this kind changes the fundamental conditions in which women and girls live across the globe. Every calamity, disaster and the ongoing war puts a disproportionate burden on the lives of women and girls rendering them more vulnerable to violence and exploitation. In the virtual era, safety of women has shrunk further. Until and unless the basic fabric of discrimination perpetuated through attitude and perceptions is not dismantled from its roots, nothing significant is going to change. Another year...some more awards...many more discourses on women's empowerment and the cycle of violence will continue unabated.

Dr. Sunitha Krishnan



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This Month in Impact

- 9 At-risk children mainstreamed into formal education
- 41 At-risk women supported through employment/self-employment
- 12 Survivors secured employment and moved towards sustainable and dignified livelihoods
- 2 Transgender persons exited street-based prostitution and secured alternative livelihoods
- 17 Survivors safely reintegrated with their families
- ₹1.55 Lakh Immediate relief fund accessed by 6 survivors (including 2 Minors)
- 181 Sex buyers counselled and pledged to not buy sex again
- 4.5 Lakh+ Community members reached through prevention and awareness programs

A QUESTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

“If she were my daughter, sister, or mother... would I still choose this?”

Find a quiet space.

Sit with these thoughts for a moment.

Because what we uncover may be uncomfortable.

The answers may point closer than we think.....not to everyone individually, but to the choices within our society that sustain demand.

[Read More on Page 3](#)

“SHE STEPPED OUT FOR A SMALL JOB. SHE DID NOT KNOW IT WOULD COST HER EVERYTHING.....”

[Read her Journey on Page 4](#)



Iftar Gatherings in our Learning Centres



Astha Shakthi (Eight forms of Power) The Power of Justice - Daughters of the Soil Award



Life Skills trainings for Adult Survivors



Home Management Training for Staff



Print Media Coverage of Prevention Programs



Sex buyers Counselling



Holi Celebrations in Shelter



Community Based Prevention Programs in Medchal, Telangana - International Women's Day



Karate classes for Child Survivors - Therapeutic Art



Co-Founder Brother Jose Vetticatil Birth Anniversary



Dr. Krishnan addressed nearly 300 members of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) along with other railway stakeholders including TTEs, porters, and railway workers on Human Trafficking

Demand

The Hidden Engine of Trafficking

"A survivor of trafficking is rescued. The chains are broken. The world breathes a sigh of relief. But as long as the 'order' for a human life remains, will there not always be another girl to take her place?"

Trafficking is often seen as a crime of vulnerability - of poverty, lack of education, or broken systems. But is that the whole truth?

WHAT SUSTAINS TRAFFICKING IS NOT VULNERABILITY ALONE. IT IS DEMAND.

Demand that is visible and demand that remains hidden.

There are those who buy.
And there are those who consume silently.
Both are part of the same system.

It is uncomfortable to ask:

Who keeps this system alive?

When demand exists, supply finds a way. Yet, we rarely question the choices of those who create that demand.

When a person becomes a "buyer" or a "viewer," a dangerous shift occurs: a human being is reduced to a utility. A life becomes a screen, a service, or a price tag.

A man who pays.
A viewer who consumes.
A society that looks away.

Each, in their own way, becomes part of a chain that reduces a human being to an object.

***Can every man pause and ask the uncomfortable question:
"If she were my daughter, sister, or mother...
would I still choose this?"***

Would the decision remain the same? or Would something shift?

The challenge lies not just in laws or enforcement, but in confronting what has been normalized.

When exploitation is consumed as content...
When bodies are viewed without identity...
When the person behind the image is forgotten...

Demand becomes invisible, yet powerful.

While conversations on trafficking often focus on the source, rescue, rehabilitation—perhaps, it is time to reflect on the **Accountability of the Consumer.**

Ending trafficking is not only about rescuing those exploited.
It is about **questioning the demand that drives it.**

It begins when we stop asking "Why was she sold?" and start asking "Why was there a buyer?"

**Change can never begin in systems unless it starts with individual choices.
The question is Are we willing to examine our role in it?**

Survivor to Rescuer: Swathi's Journey

Swathi was born in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh. She lost her father at the age of 5. She could not continue her education. As her mother's health deteriorated, she was married at just 14, hoping life would bring stability.

Life took a different turn.

Financial struggles deepened. Her husband abandoned her, leaving her alone with two children and no support. In desperation, a neighbour offered her work—cleaning after a gathering at a house. Swathi agreed. That night changed everything.

WHAT WAS PROMISED AS WORK BECAME A TRAP.

She was given a drink and lost consciousness. When she woke up, she realised she had been exploited. The same person she trusted handed her money—calling it “earnings.”

IT DID NOT STOP THERE.

She was soon threatened and blackmailed with videos. Fearing for her children and family's reputation, she was forced into continued exploitation—what began as deception became control.

WHAT BEGAN AS SURVIVAL TURNED INTO EXPLOITATION.

She was trafficked to Hyderabad—sold and trapped for nearly three years, forced to serve up to 30 people in a single day.

Everything changed when a police rescue operation brought her to Prajwala.
But rescue was not the end. It was the beginning of another struggle.

SHE DID NOT TRUST. SHE DID NOT BELIEVE. SHE TRIED TO RUN AWAY.

At Prajwala, she slowly began to heal. She learned to read and write, trained in tailoring and embroidery, and joined the Economic Rehabilitation Programme Book Binding where she found a sense of belonging.

THAT IS WHERE HER CONFIDENCE BEGAN TO RETURN.

As she grew in confidence, Swathi chose to continue her journey with Prajwala—not just as a survivor, but as a team member. She joined Prajwala's Rape Victim Support Programme, where she began interacting with survivors, families, and police officials—something she once very much feared.

Today, Swathi stands on the frontline, working in rescue and decoy operations, supporting survivors through legal processes, and engaging with police and judicial systems.

FROM BEING RESCUED... TO RESCUING OTHERS.

Every operation reminds her of her own journey and strengthens her resolve to ensure no one remains trapped the way she once was. Judges and officials often appreciate her courage and the impact of her work.

She shares with tears of gratitude, “If Prajwala had not been there, I don't know where I would be today. I might have been dead by now.”

Today, Swathi lives with dignity, and respect. Despite the recent loss of her son due to illness, she continues rescuing, carrying forward her mission with a smile and remains as a beacon of hope for those she rescues.

If You Would Like to Support

Every life that is restored has the power to restore many others.

Your support can help survivors heal, rebuild, and become a force of change—just like Swathi. It enables us to rescue women and children from exploitation and support them on their journey to recovery.

To support rescue women, [Donate at https://prajwalaindia.com/donate](https://prajwalaindia.com/donate)