

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

2018 | Day 1



INTRODUCTION TO POST RESCUE OPERATION

She wasn't merely confined under lock and key in a brothel on the 3rd floor of 'Sapna Mansion' on the outskirts of Kamathipura red-light area. Day and night she had been subjected to numerous rapes. It was feared that many of her rapists were HIV+, at any point she could have caught the deadly HIV virus. She was reduced to a fragile body used and disposed by any sundry man who could pay a pittance to her pimp and brothel keeper.

Her fault – She wanted to get a job in the city to support her family and ailing parents. She was convinced that as the elder daughter in the family it was the right thing to do. A person who promised her a job in Mumbai betrayed her trust, deceived her and sold her into the sex trade. Even if she had managed to run away she had no place to go or take refuge in. She knew for sure that her family wouldn't accept her even when it was not her fault.

During her few hours of sleep that she was left with by her tormentors, she'd wake up with terror dreams. She had lost her social self, her individual self was shattered into pieces. Under torture and multiple rapes she disintegrated like a cracked mirror. From childhood she had considered herself to be a 'decent' 'responsible' and 'conscientious' girl. In those eight months of captivity and sexual slavery her pimp and brothel keeper managed to make her dependent on alcohol and drugs.

She didn't have a moment's relief from the nagging question **"Why me? Why me?"** She wanted, so desperately to get out of the life of sexual slavery, forget all that had happened to her while in the sex trade and live a normal life like many of her friends. She hated to be seen or photographed. She feared that the people in her village would ostracise her and her family if they knew that she was in the sex trade.

She didn't want to merely be free from that captivity. She wanted to get all her possessions, money, documents from the brothel. She needed medical care to recover. She was terrified with the thought of checking her HIV status. Her world would have crumbled instantly had she been detected positive.

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She yearned to learn new skills of earning a decent income so she could support herself and her family. Nothing could have restored her trust in the State and society until her offenders were brought to justice.

She was not merely to be freed from that captivity. She wanted *Mukti*, she wanted a comprehensive liberation.

The police, the government officers and the social workers called it “Rescue”. What they meant was **storming** the brothels and **forcibly** getting the girls “out” of their captivity. Often such rescues proved to be temporary physical shifts of the victims from the captivity of their offenders and tormentors.

The police the government and the rescuers could hardly see the invisible chains of captivity that ensured that the ‘Rescue’ could never give a sustainable freedom. It inevitably resulted in re-trafficking, where the rescued girls were returned to the sex trade, sometimes in the same places, under the same offenders as the government’s ‘Rescue’ began and ended with the temporary physical shifts.

Addressing all those concerns together was the soul of the fast emerging idea of Post Rescue Operation (PRO) which was expected to become an important domain of professional intervention in the anti trafficking field.

PRO means a comprehensive victim centric, rights based, development oriented professional intervention starting from the act of physical rescue and continuing till the stage of ‘self and social reintegration’ of the victim and providing justice to her. PRO doesn’t end till the victim is given the resilience to protect herself from any such attempt at trafficking her.

PRO is an emerging field of professional intervention. We at Prerana are proud that it was the Prerana’s Anti-Trafficking Center that coined the term ‘Post Rescue Operations’ globally for the first time and introduced it widely, contributing substantially to its robust evolution.



For more information to end trafficking visit fighttrafficking.org

