

PRERANA PATRIKA

FLAGSHIP PROGRAM INSIGHTS



Insight into Prerana's Flagship Program

Three decades of preventing intergenerational sex trafficking in red-light areas and driving positive change

"About 15 women and 20 children used to be huddled in a 12 feet X 12 feet dark, ill ventilated, dingy room forever stinking of urine. Generally, one toilet used to be shared by about 20 people which constantly emanated an all-pervasive stench of human excreta. At every corner of the buildings and roads, one found wet and slushy garbage dumps which added to the stench. Most of the time women had to buy water and for days children would stay without bathing. Some children were also seen being lured into gambling and bootlegging. Children below two years of age, who were dependent on their mothers and probably did not have an older sibling to care for them, were put to sleep below the bed, above which the mothers had to entertain the customers. They would seem to be too deep in sleep undisturbed by the noise and chaos in the area. On checking how the children slept so peacefully, my colleagues and I were told "they are mildly drugged or intoxicated. This way, they don't demand our time, and don't disturb when the customer is around, we can't take the wrath of the gharwali, we need to keep the customers happy and make money for the gharwali." They would receive their food only when the mother was not attending to any customers, resulting in children learning to fend for themselves or going hungry. This was the situation of the red- lights areas in the late 1980s, when we started our work. Invariably, the older children would have to take care of the younger ones. There were instances where the children were made to clean and settle the rooms for business purposes at their mother's behest, while they got dressed and ready to start soliciting. They also saw their mother being ill-treated by the brothel keepers, pimps, admis and customers which, at times, reached the heights of cruelty. After a long night's work, the mother would spend her morning catching up on her sleep and after that, with a host of other chores. Children were exposed to this traumatizing experience from the age of two and three, and by the time, they would be six or seven, they knew a lot about sex and sexual transactions and would become vulnerable to the ways of the sex trade.

We met a handful of children who had been enrolled in school and had dropped out. Speaking to these children, we learnt that the school also exposed them to the children of so called "respectable" families, and they had begun to discover the reality of the "good" and the "bad" - the socially respected and not respected, and had understood that they belonged to the latter."

Ms Priti Patkar
Co- Founder & Director
Prerana

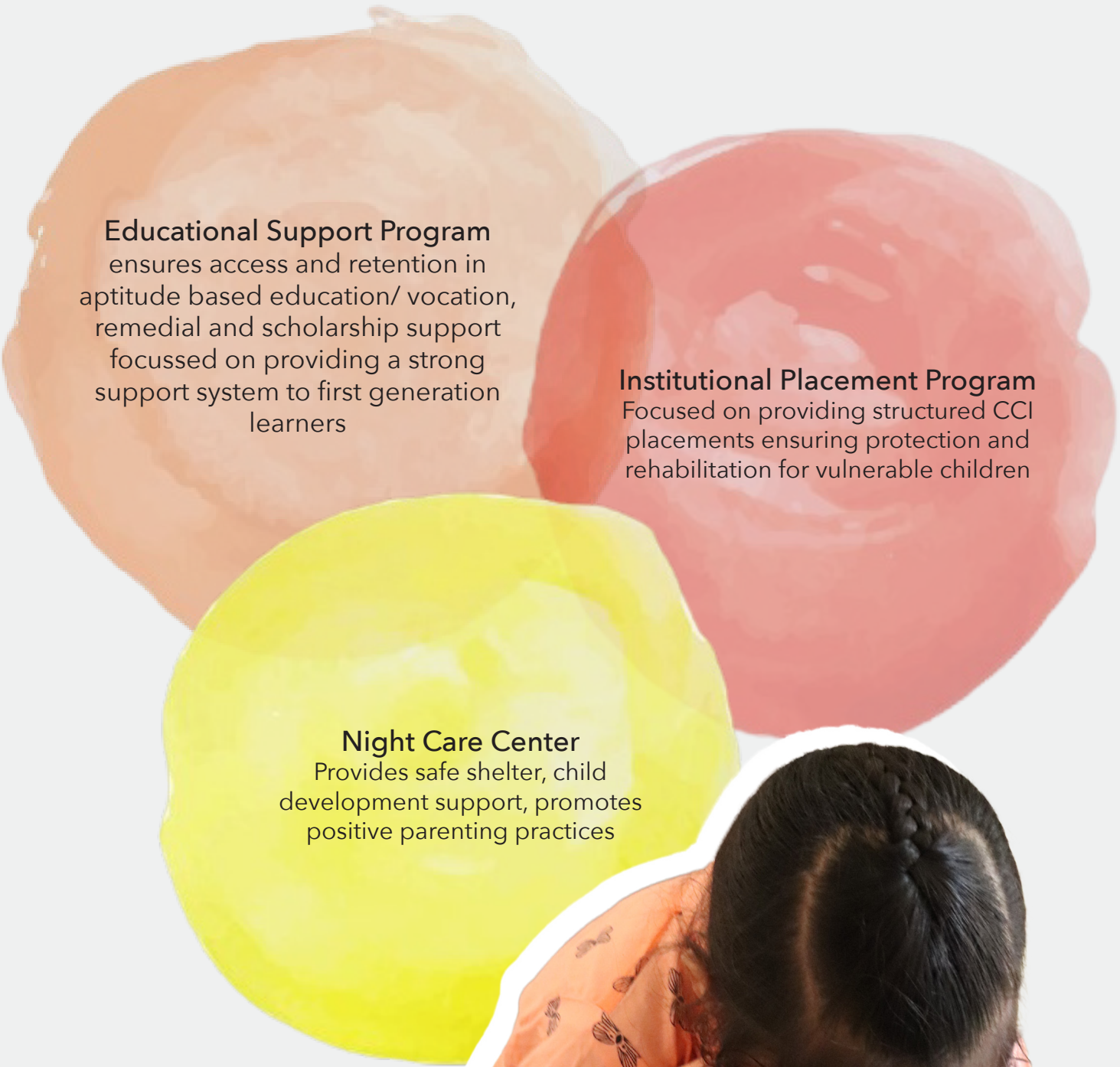






At Prerana, we recognized the importance of creating a space where children from the red-light areas could feel safe, valued, and supported. This led to the establishment of our Night Care Centers (NCC), where children are shielded from the violence, exploitation, and discrimination they otherwise faced. Our NCC provides the children a nurturing environment where they can grow, learn, feel safe and express themselves freely.





Educational Support Program
ensures access and retention in
aptitude based education/ vocation,
remedial and scholarship support
focussed on providing a strong
support system to first generation
learners

Institutional Placement Program
Focused on providing structured CCI
placements ensuring protection and
rehabilitation for vulnerable children

Night Care Center
Provides safe shelter, child
development support, promotes
positive parenting practices



Prerana's Innovative ESGT Model: A Path-Breaking Social Intervention. Prerana has pioneered transformative social initiatives, including the groundbreaking Elimination of Second Generation Trafficking (ESGT) program. Central to this effort is a unique 3-pronged approach, a comprehensive model designed to protect children born in red-light

areas and eliminate second-generation trafficking into the sex trade in India. Since its inception in 1986, this model has achieved remarkable milestones:

Policy Influence: Contributed to shaping India's first National Policy against Child Trafficking and the Plan of Action, 1998.

Global Recognition: Presented at the UN General Assembly

Congress as a 'Best Practice Model.

Scalability: Adopted and shared with NGOs across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh as a replicable framework.

Prerana's ESGT initiative continues to set a benchmark in combating trafficking through sustainable and impactful methods

Highlights of the program

Nutrition

(child receives healthy and balanced meals at the center, special provision according to medical needs, supplementary nutrition)



Health

(regular health check ups, promoting awareness on health related issues, access to counselling, referrals, follow ups resource mobilization, access to services without stigma and discrimination etc)



Education

(ensuring enrollment in formal schooling, educational retention, extra curricular support, sponsorship, LSEs etc)



Social Environment

(sessions on parenting skills with mothers, follow up with school authorities to ensure the child does not face any stigma, access to social protection schemes)

The Night Care Center (NCC), alongside the Educational Support Program (ESP), and the Institutional Placement Program (IPP) has focused on providing holistic care, safety, and development for children born to prostituted mothers in the red-light areas. Over the past 35 years (1989-2024), the program has expanded to address a wide range of needs, including educational support, referrals to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for institutional services, medical care, and opportunities for personal growth and wellbeing.

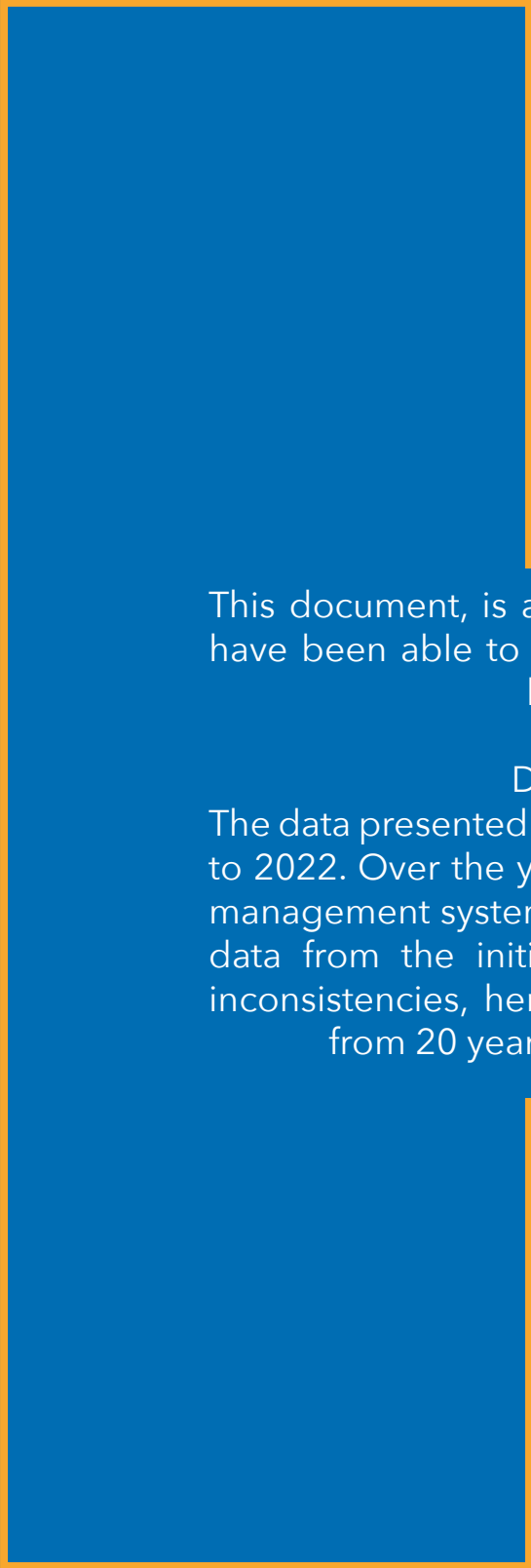
In line with the UNCRC and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, Prerana upholds that a child's rightful place is within their family, with institutionalization only as a last resort. The unique situation of children born in red-light areas to victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, sometimes makes institutional care essential for their basic survival and safety.

While the NCC and ESP catered to holistic family and community based care services, the Institutional Placement Program (IPP) was developed as a dynamic, temporary solution while working towards family strengthening. Initially focused on need-based placements in Child Care Institutions (CCIs), the program has evolved into a structured intervention aligned with the Juvenile Justice Act (2015). The IPP has supported over 741 children, working closely with government mechanisms to ensure the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable and at-risk children. The IPP team conducts thorough assessments based on the child's specific situation and urgency. When necessary, children are presented to the CWC along with their mother. In cases of abuse, orphanhood, or other severe risks, the police or local child protection system may intervene and present the child to the CWC. As per the JJ Act, the CWC conducts

inquiries to determine whether the child requires institutional care and protection. Once a child is placed in a CCI, the IPP team continues to provide follow-up support, helping children adjust to the CCI environment. The team works closely with institutions to implement individualized care and rehabilitation plans, ensuring active involvement from both the child and their family.

Under the JJ Act, institutional care is provided until the child reaches the age of 18. However, Prerana recognizes that young adults often require extended support as they transition to adulthood. Aftercare services include safe shelter referrals, continuing education support, job placement assistance, financial management guidance, personal safety training, personality development, and help with obtaining social security documents. This holistic support ensures a smoother transition into independent living.





This document, is a representation of what we have been able to achieve so far and what we haven't...

Disclaimer:

The data presented covers the period from 2001 to 2022. Over the years, our practices and data management systems have evolved. As a result, data from the initial years may reflect some inconsistencies, hence we have used the data from 20 years to ensure accuracy.

PRIORITISING SAFETY

Prerana's Night Care Center has provided a safe and nurturing space with responsible adult supervision, for 3,586 children—1791 girls and 1794 boys. Here, children have access to five nutritious meals a day, a range of recreational activities, health and hygiene and opportunities for personality development. In addition to addressing their educational and health needs, we also engage their mothers in parenting sessions and raise awareness about positive child-care practices.

Children Reached

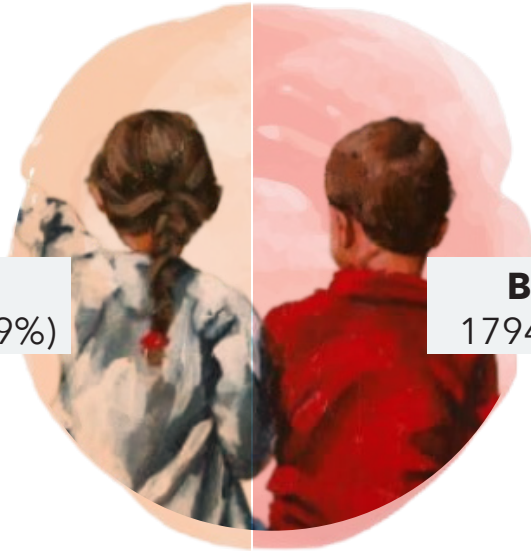
3586

Girls

1791 (49.9%)

Boys

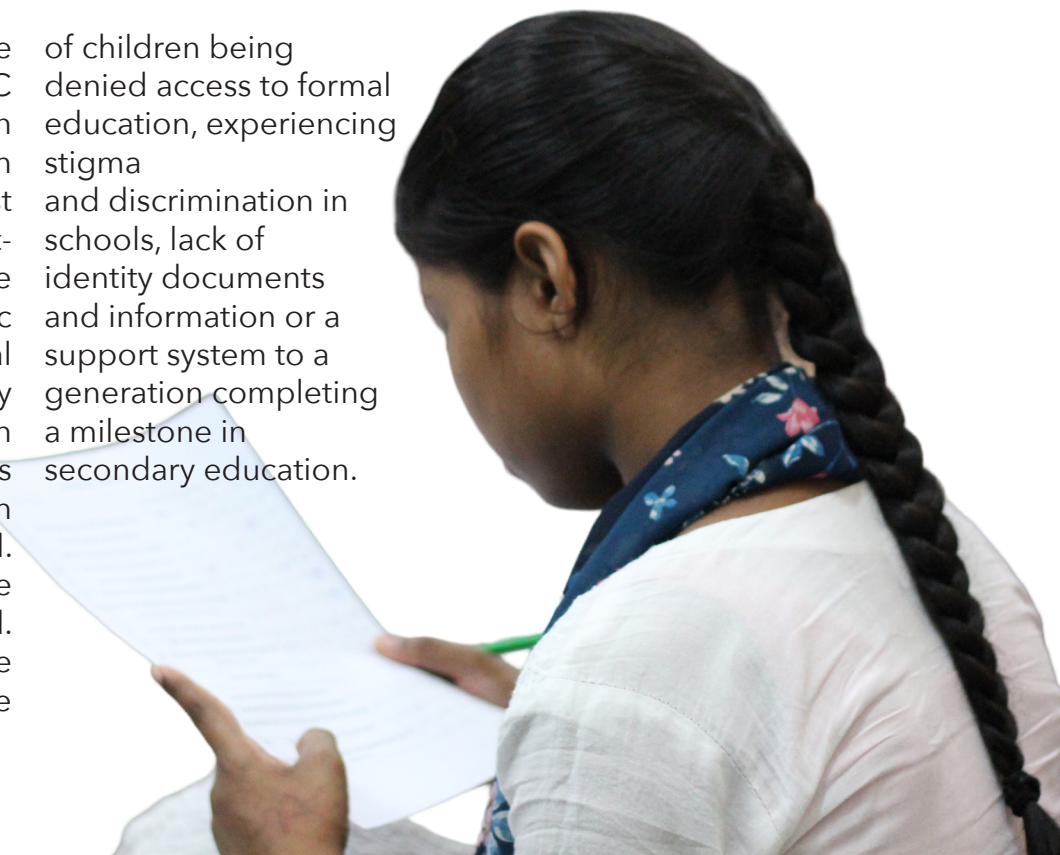
1794 (50%)



RETAINED IN FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Since 2001, 99% of the children enrolled in the NCC and ESP programs have been admitted to formal education system at the age of six. Almost all of these children are first-generation learners, and we provide additional academic support through remedial classes. This has significantly improved retention rates in school, and 97.8% of students who appeared for their 10th standard exams have passed. To date, 526 children have completed their 12th standard. This is an achievement for the organisation as we have come a long way from generations

of children being denied access to formal education, experiencing stigma and discrimination in schools, lack of identity documents and information or a support system to a generation completing a milestone in secondary education.



AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORT AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

To help children build resilience and navigate the complexities of their lives, we introduced Life Skills Education (LSE) sessions. These sessions focus on critical thinking, decision-making, conflict resolution, and effective communication, equipping with tools to make informed decisions and manage challenges.



COMBATING STRESS AND BUILDING SKILLS FOR FIRST-GENERATION LEARNERS

Children, particularly first-generation learners from vulnerable environments, often face significant challenges, both academically and socially. The stress, anxiety, and trauma arising from daily survival pressures, especially in red-light areas, dominate their lives and impact their ability to engage fully in school and other academic settings. These challenges often lead to underperformance, withdrawal, and low self-esteem. Recognizing these barriers, we incorporated career counselling and stress management sessions into our program. These sessions address both the pressures of academic life and the daily struggles of living in such environments.

So far, these sessions have reached 50% of the children, equipping them with tools to manage stress and build future-ready skills.



SECURING CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO IDENTITY

About 84.7% mothers we work with have shared that they were trafficked into the Red-Light Areas of Mumbai from states other than Maharashtra. Over 4.5% of these women shared that they were trafficked from Bengali speaking countries or Nepal. In such circumstances, having documents to prove your identity and gain access to education, ration through the PDS, shelter, medical facilities all become a challenge. Through Prerana's interventions, 95% of the children enrolled in the NCC have secured Aadhar Cards, equipping them to access basic entitlements such as education, healthcare, and ration services.

Additionally, during the earlier days, there have been instances where children born to victims of commercial sexual exploitation were forced to add a "father's name" to their identity documents. Several children were even refused admission because they could not furnish their father's name. In some cases, the mothers have had no option but to add their own father's names as their child's fathers name as the authorities would just not agree to proceed forward without this addition. Over the years, Prerana has successfully advocated for women from the red light areas to admit their children without a father's name.

Young Adults supported in acquiring Orphan Certificates:

An orphan certificate issued by the Maharashtra State enables orphaned youth below the age of 28 to access scholarships, hostel facilities, educational sponsorships for vocational training, employment opportunities, and essential documents like ration cards. Many of the youth and children Prerana supports are orphans, having lost their mothers to illnesses like tuberculosis, HIV, or similar conditions. Others include alumni of Prerana's NCCs, who transitioned from CCI and now live independently after turning 18.

However, obtaining an orphan certificate often presents significant challenges for



children born to victims of commercial sexual exploitation as they are unable to provide documents such as a father's death certificate, which is typically required. Since 2022, Prerana has assisted 32 youth in acquiring orphan certificates by working closely with the District Office of Women & Child Development and the CWC. The IPP team actively guides these youth, bridging gaps with authorities to ensure their eligibility and access to this critical document

Young Adults supported in acquiring Youth Ration Cards

Prerana became the first organization in Maharashtra to assist youth under 28 in obtaining ration cards under a government resolution dated June 23, 2021, provisioned by the Food Security Act, 2013. The team facilitated the issuance of temporary BPL yellow ration cards, benefiting youth associated with Prerana. This included individuals from Mumbai City, Palghar District, and Mumbai Suburban. To enable access, the team collaborated with the Children's Homes (CHs)



where the youth previously resided, prepared necessary certificates, gathered required documents, and ensured smooth navigation of the process.

HEALTH INTERVENTIONS WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Upon admission into the NCC, each child undergoes a thorough health check-up, with regular follow-ups to support their growth and well-being. We work together to provide specialized treatment and additional nutritional support when needed, ensuring that every child can lead a healthy life.

We also collaborate with mothers in addressing critical health challenges such as TB and HIV. Over the years, 345 women living with HIV and 645 women diagnosed with TB have been able to access

health care & support through Prerana. A special Nutrition Program was developed alongside mothers living with these conditions, ensuring their nutritional and health needs are met.

During the COVID-19 period, we remained committed to providing ongoing support to these women, ensuring their well-being.



SUPPORTING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

Prior to the pandemic, Prerana primarily focused on ensuring the safety of the children with extended support to their mothers. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Lockdown, the brothels in the red-light areas were forced to close, exacerbating the financial crisis for many women involved in the sex trade. Prerana, operating in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, observed a heightened police presence ensuring the closure of these establishments, effectively cutting off their income source. Consequently, within a week

of the lockdown over 60% of previously indebted women found themselves sunken deeper into further indebtedness. The relief work by Prerana in collaboration with partner organisations and well wishers, in terms of support of food grains and other essentials turned out to be a great financial relief and provided much needed relief. However, a need for sustainable solutions was felt. Prerana thus initiated the Economic Rehabilitation and Alternative Livelihood project to empower women to break free from the sex trade and

achieve financial independence. This initiative aimed to provide women with viable alternatives to the sex trade by offering support in accessing essential documents, setting up bank accounts, and connecting them with government schemes and microfinance opportunities. Through skills training, personalized assistance and provision of micro-grants, over 50 women have received support to start their own micro-businesses or secured employment outside of the sex trade.





Meetings with mothers

Picnics/ Residential Camps



Indoor and outdoor activities and sports

CASE STUDY I

From Vulnerability to Dignity

Before Intervention:

Manju (name changed to protect her identity), born in, 1994, was introduced to Prerana in January 1999 at the age of five. Her mother, a Devadasi ¹, had been trafficked from Hyderabad at the age of 17 under the false pretence of employment and was forced into commercial sexual exploitation. The two lived in a chawl in Kamathipura, where her mother endured immense abuse but remained determined in her desire to provide Manju with a life of dignity, agency and choice.

Aware of the dangers and vulnerabilities in the red- light area, Manju's mother admitted her to Prerana's Night Care Center (NCC). While living with her mother during the day, Manju actively participated in NCC activities from evening to morning. During this period, her mother's health began to decline due to complications from HIV.

Determined to protect her daughter from the threats of the red- light area and ensure a safe future, Manju's mother sought Prerana's help to place her in a Child Care Institution (CCI). At the age of seven, in 2002,

Manju was admitted to a CCI. However, her mother withdrew her admission after a disagreement with the institution's staff, resulting in Manju returning to the NCC and continuing her education at a local municipal school, where she completed fifth grade. In 2005, her mother succumbed to her illness, leaving Manju vulnerable and without a caregiver.



Post death Intervention:

Following her mother's death, Prerana presented Manju's case to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). She was subsequently placed in a CCI, where she lived until she turned 18. Prerana continued to provide extensive support, including counselling, psycho-social support and sponsorship for her education.

Despite the adversities she faced, Manju excelled in her studies. She completed her 10th grade in 2012 and pursued higher education, ultimately earning a Bachelor's degree in Commerce in 2017. Prerana also facilitated her participation in various skill-building programs, including hospitality training in collaboration with Taj Hotels and soft skills training with a prominent multi-national consultancy services.

Manju's determination and hardwork paid off when she secured a payroll job with the consultancy services, earning INR 13,000 per month. She further enhanced her skills by obtaining a certificate in computer training through Prerana's SoftPro program. Her ambition drove her to pursue a Master's degree in Commerce.

Today, Manju is married to a partner of her choice and is a proud mother, living a life of dignity and self-reliance- fulfilling the vision her mother had for her. In recognition of her resilience and accomplishments, Manju has been shortlisted for Prerana's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Manju's journey from a vulnerable child at risk of exploitation to an empowered young woman leading an independent life is a powerful example of how support, determination, and the right opportunities can transform a life. Her story exemplifies the impact of Prerana's programs in fostering resilience, enabling education, and guiding vulnerable children toward a rightful future with choice and dignity.

¹ The Devadasi practice is a long-standing tradition of dedicating prepubescent/pubescent girls as Devadasis (slaves of god), who are thereafter commercially sexually exploited for the rest of their lives.

CASE STUDY II

Before Intervention: Farheen's early life was marked by instability and danger. Her mother, Garima, a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, had been trafficked to Mumbai, where she struggled with extreme poverty and trauma. Farheen and her brother initially lived with their father and his live-in partner but eventually ran away due to mistreatment. Garima, who had turned to alcohol and was teaching Farheen to pickpocket, resisted placing her daughter in institutional care. Farheen's environment was unsafe, with men in the community preying on her, which led her to feel anxious and angry. Despite outreach efforts, Garima was reluctant to allow Farheen to enter institutional care, even though she was in poor health.

Farheen attended Prerana's Night Care Centre (NCC) intermittently, but her attendance was irregular due to her mother's influence and the chaotic living conditions. Over time, Garima's health deteriorated, and she was hospitalized, leaving Farheen further vulnerable. Prerana's team continued to counsel Garima, advocating for Farheen's placement in a child care institution. Garima initially resisted but eventually agreed, although she repeatedly changed her mind due to fear and attachment to her daughter. Farheen was ultimately placed in institutional care after intervention from both Prerana and the local police, following a violent incident involving her mother.

After Intervention: Once placed in institutional care, Farheen faced challenges adjusting, but with continuous support from Prerana's team, she gradually settled into the CH. The Prerana team remained engaged, visiting her monthly to monitor her progress and to ensure her well-being. During this period, Farheen's mother passed away, but Prerana provided ongoing counseling and support to help her cope with the loss.

Farheen's resilience began to show through. She worked hard at her studies, completing her 10th and 12th exams and showing a keen interest in acting and anchoring, even winning prizes at various events. With Prerana's support, she pursued a Bachelor's in Mass Media, achieving an impressive 64% in her Junior College exams through Commerce stream. During this time, she also participated in functional and emotional skills training with Tata Consultancy Services.

Farheen's ambition to enter the film industry led her to secure internships in Film City and Event Management. She received additional support from celebrity film director Nagesh Kukunoor's Laxmi Initiative and the Raay Foundation, who supported in funding her education. Prerana continued to assist Farheen in acquiring essential documents like an orphan certificate and ration card. Today, Farheen has completed her Master's in Mass Media and is employed in a financial services company as a data entry operator, supporting herself while continuing to pursue her aspirations.

She has transitioned to independent living in a group home after spending time at the Children's Home.

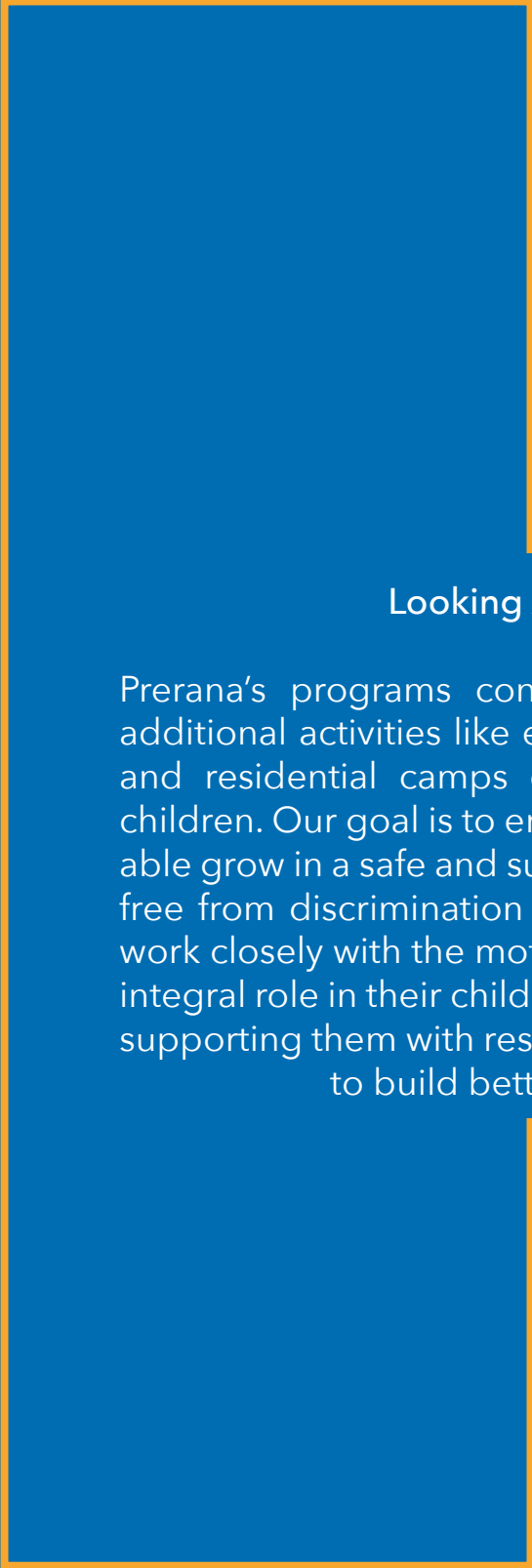
This case illustrates the transformative impact of Prerana's Institutional Placement Program, which supported Farheen's journey from a vulnerable child in an unsafe environment to an independent young woman pursuing her dreams.





Meet the Team





Looking Ahead

Prerana's programs continue to evolve, with additional activities like exposure visits, picnics, and residential camps enriching the lives of children. Our goal is to ensure that every child is able to grow in a safe and supportive environment, free from discrimination and violence. We also work closely with the mothers, recognizing their integral role in their children's development and supporting them with resources and knowledge to build better futures.



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preranaantitrafficking.org
fighttrafficking.org

