



KOLKATA, INDIA

THE PROBLEM SEX TRAFFICKING

Kolkata is home to one of the largest and oldest red-light districts in the world. Some estimate up to 6,000 women work in Sonagachi, a cramped maze of narrow alleys and crumbling buildings that could fit in one city block. Traffickers prey on young women without a support network, selling them to brothels or private networks where they are exploited in the commercial sex industry. Sex trafficking is a violent crime: IJM has met survivors who were beaten, starved or forced to use drugs and alcohol. Some have shared that they were raped more than a dozen times in a day.

IJM KOLKATA PROGRESS SINCE 2006



435

survivors
rescued from sex
trafficking



330+

criminals restrained
for sex trafficking
offences



5,470

police, government
officials, NGOs and
others trained by
IJM



THE FACTS



40.3 million
people are
estimated to be
held in slavery worldwide.¹

India's Central Bureau of
Investigation estimates that
there are **1.2 million children**
exploited in the country's
commercial sex trade.

Human trafficking generates
\$150 billion a year globally.²

**1 child goes missing every
12 minutes** in India, and nearly
half are never found.³



“We can’t forget about the other girls still trapped in dark rooms, girls who asked me to pray that they would get taken out and given a chance.”

–Prema,* a survivor of sex trafficking

How IJM Kolkata Combats Sex Trafficking

We rescue victims by identifying brothels, hotels and other locations where women and young girls are being trafficked. We partner with police agencies in Kolkata and the state of West Bengal to rescue the victims and ensure that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect.

We bring criminals to justice by helping build strong cases against the brothel owners, managers and pimps so that India’s anti-trafficking laws are enforced. We support prosecutors at every step of the lengthy trial process, and we advocate for fair sentences that reflect the crime as defined by Indian law.

We restore survivors by walking closely with every young woman from the night she is rescued to the day she will complete our aftercare program—often years later. We partner with local aftercare homes that offer safe housing, education and job training. IJM social workers develop treatment plans for each survivor focusing on physical health, trauma counseling, personal security and economic self-sufficiency so she can truly thrive in freedom.

We strengthen justice systems by working hand-in-hand with investigating agencies and the judicial system. We partner with local government agencies to provide training that educates officials on trafficking and how to prevent, identify and prosecute the crime.

IJM KOLKATA MILESTONES

2006

IJM KOLKATA OPENS

2006

FIRST RESCUE OPERATION

First rescue operation sets five girls as young as 12 free from a brothel.

2011

BROTHEL CLOSED

For the first time ever in one community notorious for sex trafficking, a brothel is ordered permanently closed after traffickers are charged in an IJM case.

2013

LANDMARK CONVICTION

One of the most violent criminals IJM has ever encountered is convicted for both rape and trafficking—the first time this court has ever charged a man for both crimes.



DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS SAJI PHILIP

Saji joined IJM with 21 years of leadership experience in India and the Middle East, and with extensive ministry and community development expertise. After leading IJM’s community mobilization, administration, finance and human resources efforts for many years, he now oversees the Kolkata teams’ mission to rescue victims of sex trafficking and help them thrive.



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INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION is a global organization that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

*A pseudonym. Child pictured on cover is not an actual victim; image taken with consent. All text and images © 2019 International Justice Mission