

# PROTECTING and EMPOWERING EVERY LAST GIRL



AN IMPACT ANALYSIS OF APNE AAP  
WOMEN WORLDWIDE, 2002-2015

Lise McKean, Ph.D.



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MARCH 2016

*Before you do anything, stop and recall the face of the weakest person you have seen, and ask yourself: Is what I'm about to do going to help him or her regain control of their destiny?*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Journalist-turned-activist Ruchira Gupta founded Apne Aap Women Worldwide (AAWW) in 2002 in the context of building a movement to end the trafficking of women and girls into prostitution. AAWW is a registered charitable trust in India. It has consultative status with the United Nations. Apne Aap International is registered as a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization in the United States to raise awareness and funds for AAWW. In its 14-year history, AAWW has grown from a startup to a mature NGO that offers lessons for other social justice organizations. Learning, giving, and sharing are key to AAWW's ethos.

AAWW applies what it learns in the course of doing its work. It learns from grassroots members, from experts, and from opponents. It learns from its partners in a cross section of social movements: the women's movement, human rights movement, labor movement, and child protection movement. It learns and applies new lessons as the years pass and the political, economic, legal, social, and cultural contexts of its work change. This report itself stems from AAWW's commitment to learning and participating in discussions and debates on grassroots-based social justice activism.

A systemic and intersectional analysis of the distribution of power and resources informs the work of AAWW. Namely, AAWW considers trafficking into prostitution to be inextricable from poverty, social exclusion, and violence and discrimination against girls and women. Gandhian principles of **ahimsa** (nonviolence to self and others) and **antyyodaya** (empowerment of the weakest and poorest of the poor) are at the core of AAWW's work of building a social justice movement to stop trafficking into prostitution.

Democratic principles of empowerment through civic education leading to individual and collective action also are key to AAWW's approach. Its grassroots work targets localities in Bihar, New Delhi, and Kolkata that have concentrations of women and girls who have been or are vulnerable to being trafficked into prostitution. AAWW staff gradually established a presence in these communities, first through outreach and later by providing a safe place for women and girls to meet, obtain information and assistance in accessing resources, and participate in self-empowerment groups.

Its work to empower women and girls who have been or are vulnerable to being trafficked has three strands: service, organization, and advocacy focusing on:

- Protection
- Prevention
- Prosecution

In turn, each of these strands is geared to empowering women and girls to exercise their rights to:

- Safe space
- Legal protection
- Education
- Livelihood

Based on what was learned from women and girls in its community centers and self-empowerment groups, AAWW formulated an innovative approach to structure and track specific activities of members directed toward attaining legal rights and entitlements that foster empowerment. This grassroots-centered approach identifies the self-empowerment group as the unit for individual and collective organizing and for participation in the anti-trafficking movement. AAWW calls this approach **10 x 10**. Members work together in self-empowerment groups of 10 women or girls to support each other on the path to attaining ten fundamental assets that support their fundamental rights.

The full report includes an examination of AAWW's work in grassroots organizing, public awareness and media coverage, and advocacy during the periods 2002–2009 and 2009–2015; a case study of the girls' residential middle school, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Simraha, Bihar, established by AAWW in 2007; and assessments of AAWW's leadership and institutional sustainability. To provide a snapshot of AAWW's work in recent years, highlights of its accomplishments from 2009–2015 are presented below.

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of grassroots organizing during this period include:

- Involving over 18,500 girls and women who are victims of or vulnerable to trafficking as AAWW members
- Involving 65% of members in self-empowerment groups
- Supporting 50% of members in obtaining voting and/or ration cards
- Linking members with the NOMI network for sustainable livelihoods
- Supporting 12% of members in filing police complaints or taking action against pimps or traffickers
- Helping 124 self-empowerment groups to open bank accounts and participate in micro-savings programs
- Organizing one national and two state-level conferences of trafficking and prostitution survivors

Highlights of accomplishments in the area of public awareness and media coverage during this period include:

- Coordinating AAWW members who are college students to present a petition to the Chief Minister of Bihar requesting more schools and hostels for at-risk girls
- Publishing the *Red Light Dispatch* that features writings by AAWW members
- Organizing the “Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex” campaign to educate students, male youth, and mainstream media about the need for anti-demand laws that criminalize traffickers and punish men for the purchase of sex, and to collect petitions in support of legislative change. The campaign reached an estimated 40,000–50,000 people.
- Organizing the “Be Aware Campaign,” with activities in New Delhi at the India Art Fair, Shahpur Jat, the Select City Walk on International Women’s Day, and AAWW’s Field Centre in Dharampura
- Serving as NGO engagement partner for *Priya’s Shakti*, a graphic novel published by Rattapallax Production that features a heroic woman fighting to end gender-based sexual violence in India and around the world
- Hosting the Terrace Talk Series at AAWW’s New Delhi office to raise public awareness about the anti-trafficking movement
- Collaborating with the US Consulate on an anti-trafficking awareness campaign among South Asian immigrants in the United States
- Arranging for students from AAWW’s residential school in Bihar to meet with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
- Hosting the visit, sponsored by the NoVo Foundation, of 15 leaders in the movement to end violence against women to acquaint them with AAWW’s grassroots work and the 10 x 10 and Last Girl approaches
- Hosting the visit of feminist writer Eve Ensler to AAWW in New Delhi to meet with AAWW staff and community leaders Fatima Khatoun and M. Kalam
- Involving Ashley Judd in the AAWW Leadership Council and receiving mention in her 2011 memoir, *All That Is Bitter and Sweet*
- Establishing relationships with writers and activists and receiving mention in their books: *Half the Sky* by Nicholas D. Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn (also a documentary film); *Sold* by Patricia McCormick; *Town of Love* by Anne Ch. Ostby; and *As if Women Matter* by Gloria Steinem, edited by Ruchira Gupta
- Expanding AAWW’s social media presence on Facebook (8,821 likes and 11,421 members in Apne Aap’s Group) and Twitter (1,941 Tweets and 541 following) (March 2016)

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of advocacy for 2009–2015 include:

- Leading a group of AAWW members to a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where the AAWW panel members spoke alongside the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Providing leadership on advocacy to eliminate provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, that penalize solicitation of clients in public places
- Coordinating AAWW members to testify before the Justice Verma Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law
- Participating in legislative advocacy that resulted in passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which for the first time included trafficking as a criminal offence in the Indian Penal Code
- Participating in advocacy that led to a UN General Assembly resolution establishing July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons
- Participating in advocacy that led to the establishment of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Collaborating with Housing and Land Rights Network (HRLN) on research and advocacy on forced evictions in Kolkata

The challenge for any organization—and particularly for AAWW given the extraordinary range and depth of Ms. Gupta’s leadership abilities—is sustaining its mission and momentum when the mantle of leadership passes to the founder’s successor. AAWW is well positioned to meet this challenge as it transitions to a new leader. That is, 2016 marks the year that Ms. Tinku Khanna, the first person hired by AAWW and who has been a close colleague of Ms. Gupta for over a decade, takes the reins as the founder moves out of day-to-day leadership of AAWW and into the role of President.

The future of AAWW is embedded in India’s changing political, economic, and social landscape—with considerable regional differences among its program sites. With so many variables at play, planning for AAWW’s future is a complex and fluid process. Whatever the successes that occur in terms of organizing, public awareness and media coverage, and advocacy, the day-to-day enforcement of anti-trafficking laws, prosecution and punishment of criminals, and implementation of victim support programs require constant struggle and enormous expenditure of time and resources.

With their focus on individual and collective asset building and empowerment, AAWW and grassroots-centered social justice movements are committed to the long-term work of structural change. This commitment is fueled by the passion to fight against injustice wherever and however it manifests itself in society. AAWW is an organization where grassroots leaders grow—and their knowledge of their communities is respected and valued. As their experience in organizing, management, and advocacy at all levels increases over time, community-grown leaders such as Fatima Khatoon and M. Kalam are playing larger and larger leadership roles within AAWW, within other NGOs, and across anti-trafficking and social justice movements in India and around the world.

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## APNE AAP WOMEN WORLDWIDE IN CONTEXT

Journalist-turned-activist Ruchira Gupta founded Apne Aap Women Worldwide (AAWW) in 2002 in the context of building a movement to end the trafficking of women and girls into prostitution. AAWW is a registered charitable trust in India. It has consultative status with the United Nations. Apne Aap International is registered as a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization in the United States to raise awareness and funds for AAWW

The first part of this study presents an overview of this context and introduces the Gandhian principles and theory of change that guide AAWW's approach to individual and collective empowerment of women and girls. Subsequent parts of the study comprise: an examination of AAWW's work in grassroots organizing, public awareness and media coverage, and advocacy during the periods 2002–2009 and 2009–2015; a case study of the girls' residential middle school, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Simraha, Bihar, established by AAWW in 2007; and assessments of AAWW's leadership and institutional sustainability.

## Creating a Movement to End Trafficking of Women and Girls into Prostitution

*The Selling of Innocents*, an Emmy award-winning documentary about the trafficking of Nepali girls into prostitution in India, marks its 20th anniversary in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Working on the documentary marks a turning point for journalist Ruchira Gupta. Once she witnessed the reality of trafficking, she placed the fight to protect and empower girls and women—and to end trafficking—at the center of her life. For the last 20 years, her focus has been building a movement centered on the voices and needs of the most vulnerable women and girls.

Ms. Gupta leveraged her status as an Emmy awardee, along with her professional expertise and social networks, to bring the issue of trafficking to the attention of national and global leaders and policymakers: the Indian government, the US Congress, and the United Nations. Her work for USAID included developing anti-trafficking plans for Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kosovo, Laos, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. In 2002 Ms. Gupta returned to India and founded the NGO AAWW.

In its 14-year history, AAWW has grown from a startup to a mature NGO that offers lessons for other social justice organizations.<sup>2</sup> Learning, giving, and sharing are key to AAWW's ethos. AAWW applies what it learns in the course of doing its work. It learns from grassroots members, from experts, and from opponents. It learns from its partners in a cross section of social movements: the women's movement, human rights movement, labor movement, and child protection movement. It learns and applies new lessons as the years pass and the political, economic, legal, social, and cultural contexts of its work change. This report itself stems from AAWW's commitment to learning and participating in discussions and debates on grassroots-based social justice organizing and activism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Emmy was awarded to *The Selling of Innocents* for Outstanding Investigative Journalism in 1996.

<sup>2</sup> The term, non-governmental organization (NGO) encompasses what are known in India as charitable trusts and in the United States as 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.

<sup>3</sup> The author of this study, Dr. McKean, is a social anthropologist who has been conducting research in India since 1987. She has been in conversation with Ms. Gupta about AAWW since its founding and made site visits to AAWW's community center and headquarters in New Delhi for meetings with staff and members. In 2013 she went to program sites in rural Bihar and met with the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police during a fact-finding mission related to police harassment of AAWW staff.

## Opponents, Controversy, and Hard Numbers

The principles underpinning AAWW's position on trafficking and its opposition to the legalization of prostitution are not without opponents in India, the United States, and elsewhere. For example, sociologist Ronald Weitzer writes articles for academic journals that criticize the movement to end trafficking into prostitution. He and like-minded academics argue that the anti-trafficking movement enormously overstated how many women and girls are trafficked or at risk of being trafficked into prostitution in order to sway policy debates. Their evidence is the fact that later figures used by the US Government and the UN were much smaller. At the same time they concede that substantial difficulties in obtaining valid data result in a lack of credible data. That is, it is hard to get hard numbers on prostitution and human trafficking of all kinds.

Critics also charge the movement with neglecting the larger number of people who are trafficked as laborers and subjected to human rights violations. For some critics, however, the disagreement centers on the anti-trafficking movement's definition of prostitution as a violation of human rights and its staunch opposition to the legalization of prostitution. They argue that criminalization of prostitution makes it more dangerous for women, some of whom make a rational economic and personal choice to work as prostitutes.

Over the past 20 years, the public, politicians, and policymakers have found advocates from the anti-trafficking movement such as Ms. Gupta and Apne Aap more persuasive than proponents of legalized prostitution. Those working to protect women and girls from being trafficked into prostitution acted strategically through public and private institutions and the media, and attracted influential persons to support their cause. Before founding AAWW, Ruchira Gupta was at the forefront of the movement, and since its founding, AAWW has strengthened the connections between the grassroots and advocacy for legislative and policy change.

Professor Weitzer's 2007 article, "The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade," offers a framework for understanding the process whereby this "moral crusade," which others regard as a movement for social justice, established institutional power.<sup>4</sup>

- Consultation and inclusion of activists in policymaking
- Official recognition and endorsement of ideology
- Officials' independent articulation of ideology
- Programmatic and legal changes in accordance with ideology

The policy and legislative successes of the anti-trafficking movement have been hard fought within national and international institutions such as the Indian Parliament, US Congress, and UN. Sustaining these political successes, however, requires ongoing effort and strong partnerships with broadly based social movements. Hence, AAWW's commitment to situating anti-trafficking work within a range of social justice movements.

## The Last Girl and AAWW's Theory of Change

In his recent book, *The Country of First Boys*, Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen reflects on the cultural values and political and social institutions in India that nurture, privilege, and reward first boys.<sup>5</sup> He notes that the same values and institutions penalize the poor—and particularly last girls. The deprivation and hardship associated with poverty are compounded by discrimination against girls and women as well as by caste and religious prejudices. Professor Sen indicts India's government and politically influential upper and middle classes for their dismal record on providing basic needs such as water, toilets, housing, food, health care, education, and employment to large sectors of the population.

A systemic and intersectional analysis of the distribution of power and resources informs the work of AAWW. Namely, AAWW considers trafficking into prostitution to be inextricable from poverty, social exclusion, and violence and discrimination against girls and women. Gandhian principles of **ahimsa** (nonviolence to self and

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald Weitzer, "The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade," *Politics and Society* 35, no. 3 (2007): 458.

<sup>5</sup> Amartya Sen, *The Country of First Boys* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

others) and **antyyodaya** (empowerment of the weakest and poorest of the poor) are at the core of AAWW's work of building a social justice movement to stop trafficking into prostitution.

The "last" girl is Gandhi's weakest person. She is weaker than the poor, low-caste man because she is female. She is weaker than the poor low-caste man's wife because she is a teenager and no one respects her wishes or rights at all—to go to school or help at home, to not marry or be prostituted, what to wear, when to eat.<sup>6</sup>

Antyyodaya is central to the theory of change guiding AAWW. The movement to end trafficking identifies and changes the conditions that make girls and women vulnerable to being trafficked—conditions that deprive girls and women of the right to make choices about their education and livelihood. The principle of antyyodaya is egalitarian and cooperative. Those who have the advantages of education, social connections, and economic security offer them in service of those most in need. They work alongside the weakest and most vulnerable women and girls and learn from them.

### **AAWW's Evolving Model of Empowerment**

When AAWW was founded in 2002, there were no organizations with evidence-based best practices on which to model grassroots anti-trafficking work. During her years in the United States, Ms. Gupta worked in high-level policy and advocacy environments. AAWW was created as an organization to protect, organize, and empower Indian girls and women who are victims of trafficking or at risk of being trafficked into prostitution.

Poverty, discrimination against women and girls, armed conflict, and natural disaster are widely acknowledged as drivers of trafficking women and girls into prostitution. For instance, intergenerational prostitution occurs when women in prostitution become ill or are no longer young and are without other means of survival; this increases their daughters' risk of being sold or forced into prostitution. These drivers vary enormously from one country to another, within a single country, from locale to locale, and among different social groups.

Drivers, however, are nothing without demand. Specific contexts allow trafficking to thrive, to be tolerated, or to be targeted for elimination. Furthermore, there is considerable variation from place to place in the extent to which trafficking into prostitution is enmeshed in the larger black economy of the criminal underworld with its attendant police and political corruption and linkages to trafficking of labor, drugs, and weapons. AAWW recognizes that the problem of demand must also be addressed. Accordingly, it does not support the legalization of prostitution. It advocates a "middle way": criminal prosecution of traffickers (including agents and pimps); penalization of clients (johns); and decriminalization of women and girls in prostitution.

Along with Gandhian principles and movement-building strategies, AAWW benefits from India's rich tradition of women-led organizing and activism. For example, SEWA, a trade union for poor, self-employed Indian women, was formed in 1972 as a means of collaborative empowerment. Beyond SEWA, decades of women-centered development and anti-poverty work in urban and rural settings by NGOs and government programs also provide important lessons and precedents for AAWW's work.<sup>7</sup>

Democratic principles of empowerment through civic education leading to individual and collective action also are key to AAWW's approach. Its grassroots work targets localities in Bihar, New Delhi, and Kolkata that have concentrations of women and girls who have been or are vulnerable to being trafficked into prostitution. AAWW staff gradually established a presence in these communities, first through outreach and later by providing a safe place for women and girls to meet, obtain information and assistance in accessing resources, and participate in self-empowerment groups.

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<sup>6</sup> AAWW Annual Report, 2013–2014: 5.

<sup>7</sup> The Mahila Samakhya program, another important model of women's organizing and collective action, was established in 1988 to pursue the objectives of the 1986 National Policy on Education. For data and analysis of this program, see "Mahila Samakhya: A National Review" (Ahmedabad: Ravi J. Matthai Centre for Educational Innovation, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, 2014).

AAWW's grassroots work contributes to building the larger anti-trafficking movement. Through AAWW's partnerships within India and internationally, the voices of trafficked and at-risk women and girls inform both public awareness about trafficking and anti-trafficking policies and legislation.

Its work to empower women and girls who have been or are vulnerable to being trafficked has three strands: service, organization, and advocacy focusing on:

- Protection
- Prevention
- Prosecution

In turn, each of these strands is geared to empowering women and girls to exercise their rights to:

- Safe space
- Legal protection
- Education
- Livelihood

Based on what was learned from women and girls in its community centers and self-empowerment groups, AAWW formulated an innovative approach to structure and track specific activities of members directed toward attaining legal rights and entitlements that foster empowerment. This grassroots-centered approach identifies the self-empowerment group as the unit for individual and collective organizing and for participation in the anti-trafficking movement. AAWW calls this approach **10 x 10**. Members work together in self-empowerment groups of 10 women or girls to support each other on the path to attaining ten fundamental assets:

1. Safe space  
Access AAWW community center, hostel, shelter, low-cost housing, and land
2. Education  
Attend adult literacy classes, health and sexuality awareness classes, and bridge programs for girls to middle school, residential school, high school, and college
3. Self-confidence  
Contribute two articles to AAWW publications; deliver two speeches; participate in two media interactions
4. Political power  
Create one anti-trafficking slogan, one poster, and one song; file one official form or petition; participate in one rally, one tribunal, one interaction with government or political authorities
5. Government IDs  
Obtain legal documents: birth certificate, voter ID card, BPL card, ration card; SC/ST/OBC certificate, Pan card; Aadhar Card; passport
6. Government entitlement programs  
Access government entitlement and subsidy programs: food and household rations, low-cost loans, land subsidies, and other government programs (NREGA/MGNEGRA; Indira Aawas Yojana; Rashtriya Swasthiya Bima Yojna; Janani Suraksha Yojana; Integrated Child Development Scheme; Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana; Rjiv Awas Yojana)
7. Savings and loans  
Participate in self-empowerment group's savings account; open post office savings account and bank account

8. Livelihood linkage  
Participate in programs to develop two vocational skills (embroidery, computers/BPO; bag, scarf, quilt making; dance and art; participate in small business activity (food preparation; bag, quilt, and scarf making; sanitary towel making)
9. Legal empowerment  
Receive legal training on rights; make visit to police and court; escort someone to file police complaint; receive training to testify in court
10. Self-empowerment group  
Participate with nine friends in self-empowerment group; become involved in AAWW network



## AAWW IN REVIEW, 2002–2015

*Insufficient or inadequate laws, poor enforcement, ineffective penalties, minimal chances of prosecution, the relatively low risks involved, corruption and complacency, invisibility of the issue, the failure of governments to implement policies and provide adequate services for victims all play a role in perpetuating trafficking.*

*PM Nair<sup>8</sup>*

The written documentation of AAWW’s work since its formation includes: four impact assessments by international consulting firm Dalberg Development Advisors; AAWW’s annual reports and reports on the residential girls’ school it founded in 2007; and press coverage of AAWW and Ms. Gupta.<sup>9</sup> These materials chronicle the scope and content of AAWW’s work over time and provide important indicators of its impact.

<sup>8</sup> PM Nair, “A Report on Trafficking in Women and Children in India, 2002–2003” (National Human Rights Council of India, Institute of Social Sciences, and United Nations Development Fund for Women).

<sup>9</sup> The four reports by Dalberg Development Advisors are: “Apne Aap Women Worldwide: A High Level Impact Assessment, 2002–2009”; “Apne Aap Women Worldwide: A High Level Impact Assessment, 2009–2015”; “Impact Assessment Report of ‘Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex’ Campaign, 2014”; and “Apne Aap Leadership Impact Assessment, 2014.” AAWW materials include: AAWW annual reports for 2007–2014; AAWW Projects, 2006–2015; AAWW’s two reports on its residential school, “Kasturba

## Starting Up and Taking Root: AAWW 2002–2009

In its impact assessment of AAWW for 2002–2009, Dalberg stated that when measured against its targets, AAWW is “an organization that has overwhelmingly delivered on its commitments.”<sup>10</sup> The Dalberg study acknowledged the considerable challenges facing the startup, including threats from traffickers, police, and other vested interests as well as the delicate nature and substantial time required for AAWW staff to earn the trust of the women and girls they were reaching out to.

### *Grassroots Organizing*

During its first seven years, AAWW established community centers in red-light areas of New Delhi, Kolkata, Maharashtra, and Bihar. The community centers offered a base for AAWW’s work of establishing its credibility. Membership in AAWW is designed to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Attendance and participation in AAWW activities constitutes membership, allowing women and girls to determine the level of participation that best suits their situation and needs. Over time key elements were identified as essential to attracting and sustaining interest and involvement of members:

- Demonstrating that children’s involvement in the community center could be a step to formal education
- Engaging women involved in prostitution and at-risk girls by listening and learning about their needs
- Offering a model of self-organization and collective decision making

During these years, AAWW developed its model of organizing as a pathway to employment. Its steps include:

- Forming collectives where women and girls meet and share experiences
- Training to build capacity to run income-generating projects and access employment
- Registering the collective as a self-empowerment group to access government programs, loans, and legal protections
- Accessing dignified livelihood opportunities and services as a right

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of grassroots organizing during this period include:

- Involving over 10,000 women and children in activities at AAWW community centers known as Antyodaya Bal Vikaskenna (ABVK)
- Involving 126 girls in Youth Groups (Kishori Mandal) by 2009. The groups offer dance therapy, instruction in computers, karate, sewing, and embroidery; they provide economic benefit and promote physical and emotional well-being and social dignity.
- Involving 136 women in self-empowerment groups (Mahila Mandal). Through weekly meeting the groups build individual and collective morale through learning how to: access health and legal services; access documents to enroll in government entitlement and employment programs; participate in micro-loan programs; open a group bank account; and file a police complaint.
- Targeting 15 Bihari villages with 45,000 persons displaced by the Kosi Flood for Youth and Women’s Groups to reduce vulnerability to trafficking
- Establishing the Kasturba Gandhi Bal Vidyalaya (KGBV) residential middle school for girls in Bihar in 2007 with 50% of its 50 places reserved for girls at risk of prostitution

### *Public Awareness and Media Coverage*

The media landscape in India is as complex and diverse as its society and politics. A common denominator across its considerable variation, however, is its preoccupation with the concerns of a small and disproportionately influential segment of the population—and a systematic neglect of the structural elements and daily-life conditions of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>11</sup> As a professional journalist and experienced social justice activist, Ms. Gupta is better

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Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Simraha, Forbesganj: Best Practices, Lessons Learnt, 2007–2013” and “Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Simraha): Best Practices, 2014”; data from the AAWW Assets Database; collected life stories of 73 asset cardholders; record of outreach and media presence, 2015; and a record of Ruchira Gupta’s speaking engagements and awards, 2000–2015.

<sup>10</sup> Dalberg Development Advisors, “Apne Aap Women Worldwide: A High Level Impact Assessment, 2002–2009.”

<sup>11</sup> For example, see the discussion of this issue in Amartya Sen, *The Country of First Boys*.

equipped than most NGO leaders to bring public attention and media coverage to the anti-trafficking movement and AAWW.

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of public awareness and media coverage during this period include:

- Being listed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as an NGO that has developed and implemented best practices to stop the trafficking of children
- Expanding media coverage of AAWW from four items in 2002, to 28 items in 2006, to 408 in 2009
- Providing social justice internships to 50 interns from North American universities, including Columbia, McGill, University of California at Los Angeles, and Yale
- Hosting visits to AAWW by activists Gloria Steinem and Catharine MacKinnon

### *Advocacy*

The same Gandhian and democratic principles that inform AAWW's organizing activities are foundational to its advocacy, again with particular emphasis on protecting and providing opportunities for the Last Girl. The following goals guide AAWW's advocacy work to ensure that public policy on trafficking into prostitution is informed by the needs of real women and girls.

- Preparing trafficking victims and survivors to advocate for themselves and providing avenues to do so. AAWW participants move from speaking in front of peers to speaking in public with government officials and politicians, police and legal authorities, and at state-level, national, and international forums.
- Developing the capacity of AAWW participants to assume leadership roles as social justice activists
- Advocating for policies that take into account the linkages of trafficking and prostitution to poverty and gender and caste domination
- Situating anti-trafficking advocacy within a social justice agenda
- Reforming legal frameworks in India and internationally

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of advocacy during this period include:

- Conducted research to obtain data for formulating recommendations on caste-based prostitution
- Developed a training manual for law enforcement
- Provided training to 2,000 police officers in Bihar and Maharashtra
- Worked with law enforcement in Bihar and Maharashtra after training to increase the number of prosecuted traffickers
- Submitted survivor testimony to Parliament standing committees
- Contributed to advocacy leading Government of India (GOI) to increase and formalize funding for anti-trafficking work
  - 2003: GOI makes first mention of trafficking in GOI Budget Funds
  - 2004: GOI makes trafficking a line item in the Budget
  - 2007: GOI establishes the Ministry of Women and Child Development
  - 2009: GOI allocates 17 crore rupees for anti-trafficking work

### *Ongoing Challenges*

During this period of growth and development, AAWW faced internal and external challenges to meeting the needs of its members. AAWW's commitment to women's self-empowerment is a service-intensive approach. This is why collective empowerment is so crucial. It enables women to learn from and assist each other with the guidance of AAWW staff in the laborious processes of accessing education, healthcare, government food and housing subsidies and employment programs, and other basic services. While collaboration with partner agencies is a logical way to meet the need for services, in practice partnerships have serious limitations. Some organizations simply are not legitimate, others are disrespectful of AAWW's members, and more often, service providers do not have adequate capacity to effectively assist AAWW members.

Another challenge facing AAWW, and one that is not uncommon among NGOs, is to collect accurate data in a timely fashion about activities and outcomes—and to use it for evidence-based planning and programming. As in many organizations, the demands of everyday tasks facing AAWW leadership and staff are compounded by a steady

flow of crises. The immediacy of organizational and member needs restricts the ability of staff to do the work of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. AAWW's engagement of Dalberg in 2009 indicates that it is committed to improving the organization's capacity to systematically document activities and outcomes.

### **Leading and Learning: AAWW 2009–2015**

*In regards to the contributions of AAWW to the anti-trafficking movement, one of my observations from sitting around the table and following the anti-trafficking discussions is that AAWW is one of the few organizations trying to bring the perspective of prostitution/trafficking in India especially with regard to the situation of girls. Equality Now has been a long-time advocate for the Nordic Model and we partnered with AAWW in a joint campaign in 2013 to basically bring aspects of the Model in India. AAWW's work brings the practical perspective of the challenges that girls face.*

*Melina Lito, Equality Now<sup>12</sup>*

AAWW's theory of change acknowledges that building a movement for structural societal change requires a long-term commitment. It takes time to build credibility, trust, and productive relationships between AAWW and its members; between AAWW and its partners in NGOs and government; and to develop and refine strategies for organizing, building public awareness, and advocating for legislative and policy change.

With movement-building as a priority in its 2009 plan, AAWW formulated goals for expanding to 100 sites that would involve 100,000 women in and at risk of prostitution and 100,000 children. After further consideration of the lessons it was learning through its work, AAWW decided that the drive to scale was not aligned with its theory of change. That is, AAWW learned that grassroots organizing for individual and collective empowerment required providing more services at its existing sites than it was able to offer. Accordingly, rather than diminish AAWW's capacity to improve operations and services already in place, it decided to suspend plans for expansion.

#### *Grassroots Organizing*

In order to establish its reputation in the target communities, AAWW used a well-established strategy for grassroots organizing:

We enroll a girl or a women in an Apne Aap network through house-to-house calls by our community mobilizers who are often survivors. Then we invite network members to meet in the safe space of our community centres where we run a small classroom. Here we organize the women to sit in circles, share stories, fill out forms for government documents and subsidies, develop campaigns, and learn a skill.<sup>13</sup>

During the period of 2009–2015, AAWW further developed its model of organizing and began to apply its 10 x 10 approach to shaping the activities of self-empowerment groups. It also decided that the most suitable way to expand the movement would be by publicizing the 10 x 10 and Last Girl approaches and advocating with government agencies, private foundations, and NGOs to incorporate them into their programs.

Key facets of organizing during this period include:

- Assisting self-empowerment groups to take up the 10 x 10 approach as a strategy for fighting for members' basic rights (safe housing, legal protection, education, livelihood)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The quotation is from Ms. Lito's written response to questions from Dr. McKean (February 29, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> AAWW Annual Report, 2012–2013.

<sup>14</sup> AAWW describes the 10 x 10 process as having short-, medium-, and long-term cumulative benefits: "As a girl or woman campaigns for these 10 assets, not only does she become a documented citizen but she goes on to get government subsidies of food, clothing, shelter, health care, and loans. She gains self-confidence, political bargaining power, and access to friendship networks. These enable her to hold on to the assets of loans, livelihood, continued education, Networks, and legal protection as well as demand improvement in the level of these assets like higher education, bigger loans, better health care, etc. Each asset reduces the risk or dependency on the brothel system" (AAWW Annual Report, 2012–2013).

- Formalizing 10 x 10 into the member's Asset Card, which tracks a member's progress toward acquiring the 10 assets
- Building the AAWW Asset Database to track the acquisition of assets across individuals, groups, and sites<sup>15</sup>
- Developing AAWW members as leaders

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of grassroots organizing during this period include:

- Involving over 18,500 girls and women who are victims of or vulnerable to trafficking as AAWW members
- Involving 65% of members in self-empowerment groups
- Supporting 50% of members in obtaining voting and/or ration cards
- Linking members with the NOMI network for sustainable livelihoods
- Supporting 12% of members in filing police complaints or taking action against pimps or traffickers
- Helping 124 self-empowerment groups to open bank accounts and participate in micro-savings programs
- Organizing one national and two state-level conferences of trafficking and prostitution survivors

#### *Public Awareness and Media Coverage*

The gains in public awareness and media coverage in this period are linked to Ms. Gupta's extensive and growing network of contacts among prominent public figures, social justice leaders, and the media world. In recent years the issue of trafficking into prostitution has attracted attention from well-known actors, writers, and musicians, some of whom become supporters and spokespersons for the anti-trafficking movement.

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of public awareness and media coverage during this period include:

- Coordinating AAWW members who are college students to present a petition to the Chief Minister of Bihar requesting more schools and hostels for at-risk girls
- Publishing the *Red Light Dispatch* that features writings by AAWW members
- Organizing the "Cool Men Don't Buy Sex" campaign to educate students, male youth, and mainstream media about the need for anti-demand laws that criminalize traffickers and punish men for the purchase of sex, and to collect petitions in support of legislative change.<sup>16</sup> The campaign included: the first online survey on male demand for sex that had over 500 respondents; an online petition to collect 10,000 signatures in support of the amendment; student campaigns and awareness drives; radio programs, podcasts, and online videos featuring the voices and stories of victims and survivors of sex-trafficking and prostitution in India. The campaign reached an estimated 40,000–50,000 people.
- Organizing the "Be Aware" campaign, with activities in New Delhi at the India Art Fair, Shahpur Jat, the Select City Walk on International Women's Day, and AAWW's Field Centre in Dharampura.
- Serving as NGO engagement partner for *Priya's Shakti*, a graphic novel published by Rattapallax Production that features a heroic woman fighting to end gender-based sexual violence in India and around the world. Engagement activities during 2015 involved organizing "The Last Girl March" in Bihar and Delhi, participating in the Jaipur Literary Festival, the Select City Walk in New Delhi on International Woman's Day, and AAWW's Field Centre in Dharampura.
- Hosting the Terrace Talk Series at AAWW's New Delhi Office to raise public awareness about the anti-trafficking movement
- Collaborating with the US Consulate on an anti-trafficking awareness campaign among South Asian immigrants in the United States

<sup>15</sup> AAWW's creation of the Asset Database is an indication of its commitment to data collection and analysis. More data points and rigor in collection, however, are needed to transform the Asset Database into a robust tool for longitudinal analysis of individual and programmatic outcomes and impact.

<sup>16</sup> This public awareness campaign to address the demand side of trafficking was coordinated with advocacy to adopt Section 5C of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA). The ITPA amendment proposed to shift criminalization from women and girls in prostitution to the men who buy sex and the traffickers and pimps who profit from sexual exploitation. AAWW submitted the petition to the Office of the President of India and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), along with the proposed amendment. The ITPA amendment did not pass. However, its advocacy contributed to the campaign that resulted in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013. The act amended the Indian Penal Code (Section 370, 370A) (Dalberg Development Advisors, "'Cool Men Don't Buy Sex' Campaign: Impact Assessment Report," 2014).

- Arranging for students from AAWW's residential school to meet with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to India in 2012
- Hosting the visit, sponsored by the NoVo Foundation, of 15 leaders in the movement to end violence against women to acquaint them with AAWW's grassroots work and the 10 x 10 and Last Girl approaches
- Hosting the visit of feminist writer Eve Ensler to AAWW in New Delhi to meet with AAWW staff and community leaders Fatima Khatoon and M. Kalam in 2003, during which Ms. Ensler pledged an award of \$10,000 to each of them for their outstanding courage, leadership, and service
- Involving Ashley Judd in AAWW Leadership Council and receiving mention in her 2011 memoir, *All That Is Bitter and Sweet*
- Establishing relationships with writers and activists and receiving mention in their books: *Half the Sky* by Nicholas D. Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn (also a documentary film); *Sold* by Patricia McCormick; *Town of Love* by Anne Ch. Ostby; and *As if Women Matter* by Gloria Steinem, edited by Ruchira Gupta
- Expanding AAWW's social media presence on Facebook (8,821 likes and 11,421 members in Apne Aap's Group) and Twitter (1,941 Tweets and 541 following)<sup>17</sup>

### *Advocacy*

As AAWW members become more knowledgeable about their legal rights and the structural barriers to attaining them as well as more experienced speaking in public, their readiness to participate in advocacy activities increased. Furthermore, events such as the Survivors Conferences built members' capacity to speak publicly about their experiences as a trafficked woman or girl and their fight to end trafficking. During this period, AAWW targeted its advocacy efforts around legislative change at the national level, which culminated in passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

Highlights of **accomplishments** in the area of advocacy during this period include:

- Leading a group of AAWW members to a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where the AAWW panel members spoke alongside UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillai
- Providing leadership on advocacy to eliminate provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA), that penalize solicitation of clients in public places
- Coordinating AAWW members to testify before the Justice Verma Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law<sup>18</sup>
- Participating in legislative advocacy that resulted in passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which for the first time included trafficking as a criminal offence in the Indian Penal Code. AAWW's participation included circulating a model bill with legal notes to clarify trafficking issues and petitions.
- Participating in advocacy that led to UN General Assembly resolution 68/192 of 18 December 2013, establishing July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons
- Participating in advocacy that led to the establishment of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Collaborating with Housing and Land Rights Network on research and advocacy on forced evictions in Kolkata<sup>19</sup>

### *Ongoing Challenges*

The types of challenges facing AAWW have not changed substantially between 2002 and 2015 because poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to basic services remain so widespread. That is, the needs of AAWW members continue to surpass the organization's ability to support members in meeting them. Furthermore, current GOI

<sup>17</sup> The figures are from March 4, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Headed by the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Verma Committee was constituted in the aftermath of the highly publicized 2012 gang rape and murder in New Delhi. The Verma Committee was charged with recommending amendments to the Criminal Law that would reduce the delay in trials of those accused of committing sexual assault against women and increase the sentences of those convicted. The Verma Committee report made recommendations on laws related to rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, child sexual abuse, medical examination of victims, and police, electoral, and educational reforms. The new law shifts the blame from the victim to the perpetrator and removes the burden of proof from the victim by making consent irrelevant to her status as victim.

<sup>19</sup> In 2014, AAWW and the Housing and Land Rights Network released the report "Forcefully Evicted and Forgotten: An Assessment of the Impact of Forced Eviction at Topsia, Kolkata."

policies reduce or eliminate funding for important anti-poverty programs and outsource others to NGOs, which proliferate with little official oversight of their operations.<sup>20</sup> In terms of advocacy, the anti-trafficking movement's legislative gains are substantial. The movement must now undertake the even more difficult campaign to ensure the law's enforcement by the police and prosecution by the judiciary.

Similarly, the problems of obtaining accurate data on trafficking, prostitution, and program outcomes are not readily solved. For example, there are indications that AAWW has made progress in Bihar and Kolkata toward its goal of dismantling sex trafficking, but the data are not conclusive as to whether the changes are in fact a reduction in trafficking or its displacement to another locale. As noted earlier, accurate data on trafficking and prostitution are difficult to collect because it is a secretive and criminal activity, victims fear exploiters and police, and family-based and intergenerational trafficking into prostitution continue to be pervasive. An additional challenge related to outcomes data arises from the fluid nature of AAWW membership, which makes it difficult to collect valid longitudinal data for a sizeable proportion of members on which to base analyses of changes and trends over time.

### CASE STUDY: AAWW'S KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA, 2007–2015

*In an impassioned plea to the officials, the women said, "Sir we are finished. Please save our daughters. We don't have dreams for our own lives but our dream is that our daughters have opportunities to access a safe place for education and be able to live normal lives."*

*M. Kalam, AAWW Project Officer, Bihar<sup>21</sup>*

*By centering solutions on the Last Girl, Apne Aap has developed a program that creates the conditions for 10 girls or women to cultivate 10 assets—from a safe space to education to skills needed for a stable livelihood. Organizing 10 girls or women at a time makes an otherwise daunting social issue feasible: 10 women who understand the sacrifice of sending their daughters away from the red light district to boarding school to protect them from prostitution, to 10 girls who get an education and a liberated future. Ten by ten by ten.*

*Kelly Miller, Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence<sup>22</sup>*

The circumstances leading to the establishment of the girls' residential school, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Simraha, Bihar, illustrate the way in which AAWW's grassroots organizing for self-empowerment meshes with advocacy. They also demonstrate the capacity of AAWW's leadership to identify public resources, navigate national and local bureaucracies and political landscapes to access them, and negotiate terms that explicitly address the needs of last girls.

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<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, when political or official disfavor befalls an NGO, the organization can be subject to a level of scrutiny that is indistinguishable from harassment.

<sup>21</sup> "Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Simraha): Best Practices, 2014": 5.

<sup>22</sup> The quotation is from Ms. Miller's written response to questions from Dr. McKean (February 29, 2016). She also stated: Apne Aap integrates a power analysis as one of the ten assets, which begins to raise the consciousness of the girls and women. The socio-political framework is one that the U.S anti-violence and anti-trafficking fields should integrate into our work. During an evening session, Ruchira Gupta stated that we needed to move from project factories to movement builders. By building the muscles for a socio-political and power analysis among girls and women, we can more effectively work to end sex trafficking in our country. Additionally, Apne Aap's strong stance that prostitution is an absence of choice is one that we should embrace and act on in the US anti-trafficking work. Ruchira Gupta's focus on centering solutions on the last girl is an essential pivot for the anti-violence field in the United States. By building the power in the margins, and shifting resources, we can begin to more directly interrupt the root causes of gender violence.

The Government of India introduced the KGBV program in 2004, with the goal of promoting education among disadvantaged girls, ages 10 to 14, in residential middle school (Class 6, 7, and 8).<sup>23</sup> The program permits NGOs to apply for funding to establish and operate a school. When a Mahila Samakhya KGBV in Bihar was unable to enroll girls that AAWW wanted to place there, it suggested that AAWW establish its own school. In 2007 AAWW opened its KGBV in a rented space. It added to the GOI's goal the additional goal of preventing trafficking of at-risk girls. In order to meet this goal, AAWW negotiated an exemption to GOI enrollment quotas so that up to 50% of its students could be girls whose caste and family background place them at-risk of trafficking.



An analysis of the KGBV program linked the work of grassroots organizing of rural women and committed NGOs to the success of specific schools, and situated these successes within the larger movement to empower women:

Our experience of KGBVs run by Mahila Samakhya in Uttar Pradesh corroborates the point made by the SSA's monitoring teams, namely that several special accomplishments can be attributed to the larger and longer story of the success in mobilizing rural women for legal and economic interventions. We feel that feminism as a social force and ideology has permitted several NGOs to invest somewhat unusual energies in KGBVs in quite a few special cases.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Grassroots Organizing and Advocacy*

- Fifty-two AAWW members and other local women attended meetings with politicians and government officials to support AAWW's proposal to establish a KGBV, arguing that education was the best way to protect girls from being trafficked into prostitution.
- AAWW partnered with the Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas (SIDH) to provide KGBV staff with initial training and followed up with semi-annual trainings.
- KGBV students met with the Chief Minister of Bihar.

#### *KGBV's Ethos of Empowerment*

In the classroom and in the hostel, the environment of KGBV fosters individual and collective empowerment through educational and self-confidence building activities. AAWW supplements the program's insufficient funding for food to ensure the girls have a healthy diet. Living in the hostel provides girls with a secure and supportive

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<sup>23</sup> In 2007 the KGBV program was incorporated into the GOI's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) education program. In 2010 the SSA Framework of Implementation was revised to comply with the Right to Education Act, 2009, which included aligning the KGBV program with the Act's protections for child rights and child entitlements.

<sup>24</sup> Krishna Kumar and Latika Gupta, "What Is Missing in Girl's Empowerment?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 28, 2008.

environment in which to study and learn.<sup>25</sup> Girls who come to KGBV with little or no formal schooling attend bridge sessions either before or concurrently with enrollment in Class 6.

AAWW supplements the curriculum mandated by the government with the curriculum developed for its Kishori Mandal youth groups that is aligned with the 10 x 10 model. This curriculum includes: vocational (computer) skills; karate; health, gender, and legal workshops; financial literacy (banking, savings, and maintaining personal and family finances); and a pen pal cultural exchange program. The legal empowerment training is particularly extensive and emphasizes how to file a First Information Report (FIR), case diary, and a missing person's report, along with imparting a basic understanding of the operations of law enforcement and the judiciary.<sup>26</sup>



#### *KGBV Accomplishments*

- 2007: Twenty-five girls enroll in KGBV at its rented premises
- 2008: Nineteen girls complete Class 8 and all continue to secondary education; three remain at the Simraha hostel to further their education; sixteen returned to their home
- 2009: Twenty-seven at-risk and vulnerable girls enroll; five KGBV graduates complete secondary school and attend college in Patna
- 2010: the new KGBV building opens and 27 at-risk and vulnerable girls enroll
- 2007–2013: One hundred and eighteen at-risk and vulnerable girls enroll and 29 girls from families involved in prostitution
- 2014: Seventy-three at-risk and vulnerable girls enroll and five girls from families involved in prostitution
- Advocacy is ongoing for the Education Department to approve expanding from Class 8 to Class 10 or 12. Such an expansion would prevent disruption of the girls' education, offer continued protection for at-risk and vulnerable girls, and increase their chances of completing secondary school and attending college.

#### *Ongoing Challenges*

AAWW staff and members inform and persuade families of the advantages of sending their daughters to KGBV. In the case of some students, AAWW staff have to involve the police and judiciary in the effort to prevent parents or other adults from removing girls from school and trafficking them into prostitution. Protecting students requires considerable staff time and resources as the following account indicates:

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<sup>25</sup> AAWW's 2014 report on KGBV describes how the school benefits its students: "Apart from an effort to cut the drop-out rate and counter sexual exploitation of girls, the residential school provides a calm and conducive environment to marginalized students to focus on academics and feel motivated" (17).

<sup>26</sup> The curriculum also teaches about pertinent national and international laws: the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Indian Constitution; and Indian legislation, including Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Prohibition of the Child Marriage Act, Right to Education Act, and Prohibition and Regulation of Child Labor Act.

Apne Aap filed many petitions highlighting that it is the responsibility of the district education cell to ensure that girls are not pulled out of the school by the traffickers. After years of complaints, in 2010, the Chief Minister of Bihar sent a team to Forbesganj, and with subsequent pressure from the Chief Minister's office and the National Legal Services Authority, the police finally took action against some of the complaints. This led to the rescue of two girls. While this was a definite success, the issue of girls being taken out of the school and being subsequently trafficked into sexual exploitation still looms large.<sup>27</sup>

As part of the government's national KGBV program, the school receives public funding. Anti-trafficking advocacy at the national- and international-level programs resulted in funding being made available for schools and programs with vulnerable and at-risk students. However, AAWW must raise additional funding to provide its Kishori Mandal supplemental curriculum as well as to feed its students more nourishing meals than the government's funding supports.<sup>28</sup>

## FROM FOUNDER TO FUTURE

*These women have given us the greatest gift—an example of courage—in their search for justice under the most difficult conditions. That means the rest of us can do no less.*

Gloria Steinem<sup>29</sup>

*As a journalist you go so far and then you back off, you don't want the responsibility of changing the world. But as an activist you go, you push, and you push, and you push, until you feel that you actually got a paradigm shift.*

Ruchira Gupta<sup>30</sup>

A constellation of forces led to the formation of AAWW by Ruchira Gupta in 2002. After her first encounters over 20 years ago with girls and women in India who were trafficked into prostitution, she dedicated herself to building a movement to stop trafficking. Her consultancy with the UN contributed to establishing trafficking as an international and human rights issue and to developing a victim-centered policy framework encompassing prevention, protection, and prosecution.<sup>31</sup> Her work with USAID included dubbing *The Selling of Innocents* into six languages as well as establishing anti-trafficking agendas for countries in Southeast Asia.

For her contributions to advocacy in the United States that resulted in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, she was invited to the White House to receive a citation for her work.<sup>32</sup> The Government of India appointed her to the Steering Committee for the Planning Commission of the Government of India for the

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<sup>27</sup> "Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Simraha): Best Practices, 2014": 9.

<sup>28</sup> The Ms. Foundation for Women is an important source of this additional funding.

<sup>29</sup> AAWW Annual Report, 2007–2008.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Holly Morris, *Adventure Divas: India* (Public Broadcasting Corporation, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Ms. Gupta's consultancy work for UNICEF contributed to the introduction of the principle of the right not to be prostituted into the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2000. She participated in further advocacy at the UN that included screening *The Selling of Innocents*, which contributed to the passage of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in November 2000 (entry into force December 2003). Subsequently, anti-trafficking activists in conjunction with UNICEF advocated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure that the international community's concerns about the criminal aspects of trafficking represented in the 2000 Protocol do not overshadow the human rights aspects of the issue.

<sup>32</sup> Ms. Gupta was the first person to present testimony at the International Trafficking in Women and Children Hearings before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (February 22, 2000). In October 2000 the US Congress passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 and President Clinton signed it into law (P.L. 106-386). The Act authorized establishing: the Trafficking in Persons Office in the State Department to provide tools to combat trafficking in persons worldwide and domestically; and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to assist in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts. The Act was reauthorized as: the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (H.R. 2620); the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (H.R. 972); the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (H.R. 7311); and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 (H.R. 898) (Title XII of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013).

Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year Plans, once for Women and Children and once for Social Welfare. She also has been appointed to a working group of the Ministry of Women and Children. She continuously leverages the recognition she receives as well as her ever-expanding network of colleagues and supporters to institutionalize anti-trafficking work at international, national, and local levels through legislation, public policy, and funding.

In the 14 years since establishing AAWW, Ms. Gupta's anti-trafficking activism outside of India has provided occasions for a broader public to learn the problem and responses in South Asia, including AAWW's 10 x 10 and Last Girl approaches. The following are examples of her ongoing contributions to international advocacy:

- Addressed UN Security Council members on the implications of trafficking for peace and security
- Addressed UN General Assembly on the global reach of trafficking
- Provided leadership for establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Delivered the keynote address at the World Forum of Human Rights, Nantes
- Delivered the keynote address at the Forum of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York, to commence the UN CSW Consultation Day

In addition to her public appearances, speeches, and lectures, Ms. Gupta teaches at New York University and speaks at universities and other venues in Asia, the United States, and Europe. She also advocates for the anti-trafficking movement and social justice more generally through her interviews and articles in the media. She was featured in the documentary *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* that aired on television in 2012. She is the editor of two books: *The Essential Gloria Steinem Reader: As if Women Matter* (2014) and *River of Flesh* (2016).



AAWW founder Ruchira Gupta

Awards are another indication of the attention and recognition that Ms. Gupta earns for her contributions to the anti-trafficking movement. Beginning with the Emmy for *The Selling of Innocents* in 1996, subsequent awards include:

- UK House of Lords Abolitionist Award, 2007
- Clinton Global Citizen Award for Commitment to Leadership in Civil Society by the Clinton Foundation, established by former US President Bill Clinton, 2009
- NOMI Network Abolitionist Award, 2010
- Karmaveer Puraskar, the National People's Awards for Citizen Social Justice from the Indian Congress of NGOs, 2011
- UN Association of New York, Women Who Care Award, 2011
- *Times Now* Amazing Indians Award: Stree Shakti category, 2012
- Godfrey Phillips Bravery National Award, 2012
- Smith College will award Ms. Gupta an honorary doctorate in May 2016.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Past recipients include Ela Bhatt, Ruth Badar Ginsberg, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Margaret Sanger.

## Leading into the Future

Through AAWW, Ms. Gupta has contributed to building a grassroots anti-trafficking movement in India following in the tradition of Gandhian leaders of the women's and social justice movements such as Ela Bhatt and Nirmala Deshpande. She also has learned from her experiences in building an international anti-trafficking movement, leveraging its gains, her networks, and her reputation to strengthen the anti-trafficking movement in India and foster the work of AAWW. In turn, she brings lessons from AAWW into the international arena, particularly the following components of a Gandhian-based approach to grassroots empowerment:

- Social justice movements organize the bottom to transform the top (10 x 10 approach): reject and refute the trickle-down approach.
- Do what you can: take concrete steps to build a grassroots movement.
- Empowered women fight their own battles: do not rely on existing power structures such as the police and judiciary to lead the fight against trafficking.
- Put the Last Girl first: center the anti-trafficking movement on the needs of trafficking victims and at-risk women and girls.<sup>34</sup>

The challenge for any organization—and particularly for AAWW given the extraordinary range and depth of Ms. Gupta's leadership abilities—is sustaining its mission and momentum when the mantle of leadership passes to the founder's successor. AAWW is well positioned to meet this challenge as it transitions to a new leader. That is, 2016 marks the year that Ms. Tinku Khanna, the first person hired by AAWW and who has been a close colleague of Ms. Gupta for over a decade, takes the reins as the founder moves out of day-to-day leadership of AAWW and into the role of President.

Ms. Khanna combines an unparalleled institutional knowledge of AAWW and the anti-trafficking movement with deep commitment to social justice and an intellectual and practical understanding of both the supply and demand sides of trafficking. Through her long association with Ms. Gupta, she has honed her own abilities as a leader who operates effectively across a wide spectrum—from the villages of India to the corridors of political power.

To prepare for this transition, AAWW sought the counsel of Dalberg Development Advisors, the firm of consultants that has assessed the organization's challenges and accomplishments for nearly a decade. Its recommendations for AAWW going forward include:

- Explore options for AAWW areas of expansion
- Develop a structured process for growth to ensure all key competences are present: administration, management, process control
- Build a successor leadership team that encompasses competencies crucial for AAWW's continued pursuit of its mission to end trafficking<sup>35</sup>

## Organizational Integrity and Sustainability

AAWW has never measured its success by the amount of money it raises. A challenge for the future will be to continue the founder's vision of AAWW as an NGO where the motivation of its staff is to give rather than take. The continued integrity of the organization and its commitment to building the anti-trafficking movement are inextricable from its approach to fundraising. Pursuit of grants and donations must remain in service of advancing grassroots organizing and not as a means for individual or organizational aggrandizement and enrichment.

AAWW has a track-record of opposing entrenched interests with deep pockets, whether they are traffickers or foundations and international aid agencies with top-down agendas. The support of individual donors who support AAWW's principles and approach has been critical to AAWW's ability to pursue its mission. Ms. Gupta's

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<sup>34</sup> See Dalberg Development Associates, "Apne Aap Leadership Impact Assessment Report, 2014."

<sup>35</sup> According to Dalberg's report, the leadership team needs to include the following types of expertise: anti-trafficking advocacy; day-to-day organizational management; NGO processes (administration, professional development, mentoring, and evaluation integrated within project management); knowledge-sharing (establishing a platform to increase knowledge and transparency across AAWW); and developing future leaders.

accomplishments, reputation, and public appearances attract supporters from all walks of life. Her continued involvement with cultivating and retaining the support of individual donors will be integral to sustaining this important source of funding for AAWW's operations and programs.<sup>36</sup>

The future of AAWW is embedded in India's changing political, economic, and social landscape—with regional variation among its program sites. In short, it is characterized by complexity. Whatever the successes that occur in terms of legislation and media attention, the day-to-day enforcement of anti-trafficking laws, prosecution and punishment of criminals, and implementation of victim support programs require constant struggle and enormous expenditure of time and resources.

AAWW and the anti-trafficking movement are situated within the much larger arena of the women's movement and other social justice movements. The Government of India, buttressed by international trends in reduction of social benefits and privatization of public services, is reducing resources for key anti-poverty programs that provide access to food, employment, education, and healthcare. This direction of GOI policy makes the work of AAWW in assisting women and girls to attain the 10 assets that support empowerment and self-determination increasingly difficult—and all the more in need of local, national, and international advocates and supporters.

With their focus on individual and collective asset building and empowerment, AAWW and grassroots-centered social justice movements are committed to the long-term work of structural change. This commitment is fueled by the passion to fight against injustice wherever and however it manifests itself in society. AAWW is an organization where grassroots leaders grow—and their knowledge of their communities is respected and valued. As their experience in organizing, management, and advocacy at all levels increases over time, community-grown leaders such as Fatima Khatoon and M. Kalam are playing larger and larger leadership roles within AAWW, within other NGOs, and across anti-trafficking and social justice movements in India and around the world.



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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 1 for Project List and Appendix 2 for AAWW Income and Expenses, 2007–2014.

## APPENDIX 1

### Apne Aap Women Worldwide Operational and Program Support, 2006–2015

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Funder</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
1	Empowering children in South Asia's red-light areas by building resilience through art and narrative therapy	Oak Foundation	October 2006	October 2007
2	Understanding the causes of intergenerational prostitution among Bedia and the Nat communities of Bihar and Rajasthan (denotified criminal tribes)	National Commission for Women	April 2007	September 2007
3	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Simraha, Bihar	Government of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan	January 2007	Ongoing
4	Training Program on Human Trafficking for Investigating Officers, Support Officers and Prosecutors in 13 Districts in Bihar, Phase 1	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	March 2007	August 2007
5	Training Program on Human Trafficking for Investigating Officers, Support Officers and Prosecutors in 16 Districts in Maharashtra	UNODC	July 2007	December 2007
6	Training Program on Human Trafficking for Investigating Officers, Support Officers and Prosecutors in 8 districts in Bihar, Phase 2	UNODC	January 2008	December 2008
7	Building a self-sufficient community in Topsia, West Bengal	Charities Aid Foundation	January 2008	December 2010
8	Supporting two community centres in Forbesganj and Khawaspur and a residential school for 50 girls in Forbesganj, Bihar	Geneva Global	February 2008	May 2009
9	Countering trafficking by addressing demand for prostitution	United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)	August 2008	August 2009
10	Combatting trafficking by building the capacity of victims, survivors, and at-risk women and girls living in red-light areas to access legal protection, livelihood options, and education: Phase 1	US Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP)	2009	2011
11	Dismantling organized criminal syndicates along Indian border areas: rescuing victims, building capacity, and disrupting trafficking routes	UNIFEM	June 2009	December 2009
12	Empowering 100 girls socially and financially with savings, life skills, and livelihood training in safe spaces in Araria, Bihar	Paul Hamlyn Foundation	August 2009	July 2012

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Funder</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
13	Developing Apne Aap's strategic business plan 2009–2014	NoVo Foundation	September 2009	January 2010
14	STEP computer learning centre, Kolkata: Phase 1	SMILE Foundation	January 2010	December 2011
15	Developing partner classrooms between Apne Aap girls in Kidderpore and the Hun School, United States	Girls Learn International	January 2010	December 2011
16	TWIN e-learning centre for the underprivileged youth in red-light areas of Najafgarh, Delhi	SMILE Foundation	January 2010	December 2012
17	Gender Resource Centre-Suvidha Kendra	Delhi Government, Mission Convergence	September 2010	September 2013
18	General operating support	NoVo Foundation	October 2010	September 2013
19	Computer Learning Centre	ASSET India Foundation	January 2011	December 2011
20	Combatting trafficking by building the capacity of victims, survivors, and at-risk women and girls living in red-light areas to access legal protection, livelihood options, and education: Phase 2	G/TIP	2011	2012
21	STEP computer learning centre, Kolkata: Phase 2	SMILE Foundation	January 2011	December 2012
22	General operating support	Irish Embassy in India	April 2011	September 2011
23	Empowering girls in red-light areas of Uttari Rampur and KGBV students, Forbesganj, Bihar	KEEP	July 2012	April 2014
24	Joint project with NOMI Network under G/TIP award to train at-risk women for livelihood options	G/TIP	2012	2014
25	Research study on educational status of denotified tribes in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Delhi	Indian Council of Social Science Research	November 2012	December 2014
26	General operating support	NoVo Foundation	January 2013	December 2013
27	Support for AAWW anti-trafficking initiatives	Children's Investment Fund Foundation	January 2013	October 2013
28	Fostering leadership for self-sufficiency to end trafficking for sex	Off the Mat Into the World	January 2013	December 2013
29	Combating trafficking and sexual exploitation globally	FOKUS-Women's Front, Norway	January 2013	December 2014

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Funder</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
30	General support for programs	Donor Direct Action	January 2014	December 2015
31	Ending sex trafficking by freeing the Last Girl	TIDES Foundation	January 2015	December 2016
32	Support Apne Aap's program and mission to care for and empower at-risk girls and women and victims and survivors of sex trafficking	Go Campaign	January 2015	July 2015
33	Skill-building program for 10 girls from Najafgarh	Thadani Foundation	February 2015	December 2015
34	TEACH: putting children living in red-light areas and from denotified tribes into schools	Rotary India Literacy Mission	March 2015	February 2016
35	Gender training and other leadership training in Araria, Bihar	Share and Care Foundation	December 2015	November 2016
36	Adoption of schools in Najafgarh	Canadian Foundation for Local Initiatives	January 2016	March 2016

## APPENDIX 2

### AAWW Income and Expenses, 2007–2014\*

Year	Income	Expenses	1 INR = \$US**
2007–2008	₹192.0 lakh \$477,137	₹123.4 lakh \$306,660	40.24
2008–2009	₹185.4 lakh \$403,745	₹142.8 lakh \$310,975	45.92
2009–2010	₹240.0 lakh \$532,937	₹232.8 lakh \$517,960	***
2011–2012	₹297.8 lakh \$621,437	₹260.0 lakh \$542,597	47.92
2013–2014	₹716.5 lakh \$1,184,042	₹619.2 lakh \$1,023,345	60.51

\* Based on information in AAWW's annual reports

\*\* Average for year, Reserve Bank of India

\*\*\* Rupee and dollar amounts provided by AAWW



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